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**THE LIFE OF CHRIST**



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# THE LIFE OF CHRIST

BY

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## PREFACE

EVERY student of the life of Christ has at hand, in the four Gospels, practically all the original sources. This is a most unusual advantage; and, since the first principle of historical research is to go back to the sources, any textbook that diverts his attention from the Gospels or serves as a substitute for them is to be condemned. Nevertheless, to limit a student's knowledge to what he himself can discover in the Gospels is like limiting the student of chemistry to his own unaided investigations in the laboratory. Some acquaintance with what the great company of New Testament scholars have discovered is needful as a guide in personal study, and must be furnished the student along with the text. The difficult problem is to keep the textbook from usurping the place of the text.

While a Life of Christ has for its purpose to aid the student in his study of the Gospels, it should not undertake to be a substitute for a commentary on them; the detailed discussion of each incident and the exegesis of each obscure passage belong to later and more minute study. Nor should it take the place of a Bible dictionary; a mass of information about the geography, flora, fauna, history, politics and religion of Palestine in the first century may bury the biography out of sight, and defeat the purpose of the book. Least of all should it be a series of sermons on the words and deeds

of Jesus; the homiletic instinct, however praiseworthy, is a poor guide in historical study.

The average student has more or less knowledge (sometimes surprisingly less) of the separate incidents in the life of Christ; but he has little conception of their relation to each other, of their place in the history as a whole, and of their significance and importance. His store of information is a confused heap of disconnected details. This is due partly to the character of the Gospels themselves, in that they are not a history but a collection of precious memorabilia, and still more to the unsystematic, disjointed way in which the Gospels are usually read and studied. What he needs is aid in bringing order out of such chaos. His textbook should help him to recognize the main periods and great turning points in the life of Christ, to determine the place and connection of the various incidents, and especially to answer two most important questions, What did Jesus attempt to do? and What did he claim to be?

The number of Lives of Christ written within the past fifty years is so great as to remind us of the closing words of the Fourth Gospel, "I suppose even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." The best of these Lives is not altogether satisfactory,—this furnishes incentive to write another; the worst is not altogether worthless,—this furnishes consolation in offering the present one. The necessary preliminary discussion of the nature and value of the gospel records was undertaken by the writer in an earlier volume, his Introduction to the Life of Christ. In it will be found the reasons for basing the present book on all four of the Gospels instead of restricting it to the Synoptics

or even to the sources that lie behind them. With due recognition of the peculiar character of the Fourth Gospel, he is by no means ready to pronounce it of no historical value; and with full appreciation of the attempts to recover the earliest account, written or oral, of what Jesus said and did, he fails to be convinced that this should supersede all later accounts as necessarily presenting the truest picture of the Master.

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# THE LIFE OF CHRIST

## I

### PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST

**N**O figure in history is so free from the limitations of race, place and time as Jesus Christ. Though a Jew, He seems equally a Gentile; though an Oriental, He is Lord of the Western world; though born in the days of Herod the king He dominates the present age. Yet to understand His life and teachings we must make ourselves well acquainted with Palestine of the first century. We cannot fully appreciate what He did, until we know what the Jews of His time expected Him to do; and we cannot rightly interpret what He said, until we know the thoughts and feelings of the men to whom He spoke. Had Jesus lived in a different environment, His mission and His message would have been the same; but their outward form,—His acts and His words,—would have been changed to correspond to it.

We must, therefore, begin the study of the life of Christ by placing before ourselves the Palestine of His day. Fortunately the material for doing this is abundant. Interest in the subject has caused scholars to collect every least item of information; and we have volumes devoted entirely to the political, social and religious conditions in which Jesus passed His

earthly life. Only an outline of the subject can be given here.

### I. Political Conditions.

In the whole period of Jewish history from the Exile to the birth of Christ,—a period longer than from the discovery of America to the present day,—the Age of the Maccabees, 162-63 B.C., was the only time when the Jews possessed national independence. For a little while the glory of the days when David and Solomon ruled a strong, united people seemed to return, and Palestine was able to play an important part in the troubled politics of Western Asia. But the later Maccabean kings were feeble rulers; the strife of religious sects divided and weakened the nation; and Rome was steadily extending its dominion. The end came when Pompey the Great was invited to arbitrate between rival claimants, and settled their disputes by taking the throne for his own nation.

A Maccabee still was allowed to rule as a dependent of Rome and without the title of king; but the real governor, the power behind the throne, was a wily Idumaeen named Antipater or, in its abbreviated form, Antipas, the founder of the famous Herodian family. The Idumaeans were descendants of the ancient Edomites, and now occupied the extreme southern portion of Palestine. They had recently been conquered by the Maccabees and incorporated into the Jewish kingdom; so nominally Antipater was a Jew, but the old Jewish hatred of the Edomites still continued and made him detested. His power, however, depended upon the favor of Rome which he always managed to keep, even to the extent of gaining Roman citizenship for himself and, therefore, for all his de-



scendants. After his death, 43 B.C., there arose in Palestine a fierce struggle of opposing powers to which the Romans could pay no attention because they were busy with the dissensions that followed the murder of Julius Caesar. Accordingly, a son of Antipater, Herod, who was the thick of the Jewish troubles, went to Rome, 40 B.C., and gained permission to win by arms the Jewish throne for himself. It took him three years to crush his enemies; then he reigned, more like an ally of Rome than like a subject, until his death in the spring of 4 B.C.

Herod in many ways deserved his title, the Great, and has well been called "the brain of the East." To keep his throne,—which was the central purpose of his life,—was a task demanding marked ability. On the one hand, he must retain the favor of the Romans, and make this frontier kingdom strong and loyal; otherwise he would be deposed. On the other hand, he must either propitiate or overawe the Jews; otherwise they would rise in rebellion and drive him out. The Romans were more easily managed than the Jews. Herod did a great deal for his people, feeding them at his own expense in time of famine, exterminating bands of robbers and foreign marauders, making Caesarea into a good seaport, extending and protecting the frontiers, and erecting magnificent buildings all over Palestine. He also looked after the welfare of the Jews in all parts of the Roman empire, insisting that they be treated with respect and enjoy equal rights with other nationalities. Really, the benefits he bestowed would seem a sure means of winning the affection of his subjects; but his motive in all was purely selfish, and the Jews knew this. Moreover, their recent independence made them restless under any foreign

yoke, however light; and that an Idumaeen and Roman citizen should sit on the throne of David seemed sacrilege. The greater the glory and success of such a king, the more his rule would be resented. Herod, in turn, disliked the Jews and despised their religion; at heart he was a heathen. For a time he took pains to conceal his real attitude and to conciliate the devout; but later on, when he felt firmly established and able to suppress any uprising, he seemed to find a malicious pleasure in outraging the religious feelings of the Jews, and then punishing severely the uprising that invariably followed.

Herod's private life was made wretched by the mutual jealousies and strifes of his numerous wives and children, who again and again filled him with the suspicion that those whom he loved most were plotting against him. At last he reached a point where he trusted no one, and where from alternations of violent rage and remorse he was almost insane. One after another, his children were put to death, until Augustus dryly remarked, "It is better to be Herod's swine than his sons." In the bloodshed which stained the close of his reign, the murder of some babes at Bethlehem was such a minor incident that we are not surprised to find it unrecorded except in Matthew.

By his will, which the Roman government confirmed, Herod divided his kingdom between three sons, giving Judea, Samaria and Idumaea to Archelaus; Galilee and Peraea to Herod Antipas; and the region northeast of the lake of Galilee to Philip. The title of Archelaus was ethnarch, and of the other two sons tetrach; but the terms mean much the same as king (in fact, Herod Antipas is called king in Mark 6: 14 f.

and Matt. 14:9); and the sons had about the same authority as their father, and stood in about the same relation to the Roman government. Philip was the best of them, and ruled quietly and justly until his death, 34 A.D. At the foot of Mount Hermon, where the Jordan takes its rise in what was once a famous cave and heathen shrine, he built a city, and called it Caesarea in honor of the emperor, the name Philippi being added to distinguish it from the more important Caesarea on the seacoast. Comparatively few of his subjects were Jews, and he plays no part in the gospel story. Herod Antipas was much like his father, only less able and more sly: "that fox" is what Jesus called him. His capital was at first Sepphoris and later Tiberias, a city built by him during Jesus' public ministry. His marriage with Herodias, which John the Baptist condemned, brought on a series of misfortunes, ending with his banishment by Caligula about 39 A.D. Archelaus ruled so wretchedly that Augustus deposed him in 6 A.D., and changed his realm into the imperial province of Judea, governed by a procurator as the representative of the emperor. There was a series of these procurators in which Pontius Pilate, 26-36 A.D., was the fifth. Their government must be more fully described.

Though the emperor had taken direct possession of Judea, little change was made in the policy of leaving the Jews to govern themselves as far as possible; in fact, they had more independence than when under the Herods. The procurator dwelt at Caesarea, but came to Jerusalem on occasions, especially at the feasts when the city was crowded and there was danger of riots. His residence in Jerusalem was the palace built by Herod the Great on Mount Zion. To maintain

order he had an army, one cohort of which was stationed at Jerusalem. The army officers seem to have been worthy Romans; the common soldiers were recruited in the province; and as Jews were exempt from military service because they had religious scruples against fighting on the Sabbath, the recruits were largely Samaritans, thus making the army doubly unpopular with the Jews.

The Romans, of course, imposed taxes, which were used for the expenses of the government and the improvement of the province, only the surplus being sent to Rome. A land tax and a poll tax were definitely fixed and collected by imperial officials, probably through the agency of the Sanhedrin. The customs were farmed out to the highest bidders. These men and their underlings collected as much as they could squeeze out of the people, and kept as their profits all above the amount they had bid. Evidently there was every inducement to extortion; and though the collectors ("publicans") often were Jews, they were despised, hated and classed with robbers.

The right to coin money was jealously guarded by ancient rulers, and seldom entrusted to subject nations. The Maccabees as independent sovereigns possessed that right, and minted copper coins,—possibly also a few silver coins. The Jewish copper coinage was continued under the Herods and the procurators. The most common silver coin in the time of Christ was the Roman denarius,—the "penny" of the King James' New Testament,—whose value today would be about twenty cents; but foreign silver coins of all sorts were in circulation or found their way to the money changer's table. For the payment of temple dues "the shekel of the sanctuary" was required, which probably



was a Phoenician silver coin worth about sixty-seven cents.

The procurator, as has been said, allowed the Jews a large measure of self-government. Each community had its council (sanhedrin) made up of leading men who managed affairs and settled disputes. Under its control were religious as well as civil and criminal matters, for the Jews made no distinction between them, or rather treated all as religious. Above these local courts, as the final authority and chief governing power, was the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. This was a body of seventy-one men,—chief priests, scribes and elders, with the highpriest as president. How they were selected we are not informed; but probably they held office for life, and themselves chose men to fill vacancies. Certainly they were not elected by popular vote; and Josephus well describes the form of government as an aristocracy under the presidency of the highpriest. All matters involving the application of Jewish law to Judeans came under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin; and its sentence was final; though if the sentence was death, it must be ratified by the procurator. The Roman authorities, however, could take the initiative, and try the case themselves; or they could call the Sanhedrin together, and require it to render a decision. According to the Talmud a false prophet, a highpriest, or a tribe charged with idolatry could be tried only by the Sanhedrin. Outside of Judea the Sanhedrin had merely such authority as might be voluntarily given it; but devout Jews in the realm of Herod Antipas and all over the world revered its opinions, and willingly submitted themselves to its decisions.

Though Samaria was part of the province of Judea,

and under the same procurator, it had to be treated as a separate country, since the Jews had no dealings with Samaritans (John 4:9). It seems to have had its own council with powers similar to those of the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. The Romans favored Samaria as being a help in holding the rebellious Jews in order; and Pontius Pilate was recalled because he put down a fanatical uprising of Samaritans with unnecessary severity.

## 2. Jewish Sects or Parties.

Political opinions unite men into parties; religious opinions, into sects; but in Palestine politics and religion were so combined that the same body of men might with equal propriety be called a party or a sect. The question of taxes, for example, would in other lands be purely political; but the Jews debated hotly whether paying taxes to Caesar was breaking the law of God or not (Matt. 12:14).

The Zealots or Cananaeans, to whom one of the apostles originally belonged (Mark 3:18), were men fanatically eager to drive out the conquerors of their country. It was they who forced the final rebellion of 66-70 A.D., and in that rebellion used the sword against not only the Romans but also any of their own countrymen who sought a compromise. We should call them a political party; yet their motive was to reclaim the Holy Land for Jehovah, its true ruler.

The Herodians, who are mentioned twice in the gospel narrative (Mark 3:6; 12:13) but in no other contemporary writing, supported the royal claims of Herod and his family. What their motive was we do not know; probably they thought it better to be ruled by an Idumaeon house, which was in a way their own

kindred, than to be under the direct rule of the Romans. The theory of some scholars, that they believed Herod the Great to have been the promised Messiah, is hard to accept.

The best known and most influential of the sects or parties was the Pharisees. They are first mentioned by this name in the time of the Maccabees; but to discover their origin and understand their character we must go back to the days when Ezra read the law at Jerusalem and put the people under a covenant to keep it (Neh. 8: 1 f.). From that time onward there was an increasing emphasis of the law, which deeply influenced Jewish life, and out of which arose both the scribes and the Pharisees. The scribes were a body of scholars who, as the name indicates, made copies of the law, but whose more important work was studying, interpreting, applying and teaching it, and who were, therefore, called lawyers (Luke 11: 45) or doctors of the law (Luke 5: 17). Their pupils addressed them as *rabbi* (Matt. 23: 7) which means "my great one," *monseigneur*; later than the time of Christ this became a special designation for them. In their zeal for the law they were continually laying down rules to prevent any ignorant or accidental violation of it. For example, the Fourth Commandment forbids work on the Sabbath; and carrying burdens unquestionably is work; but just what is a burden, and what constitutes carrying it, and what measures are necessary to guard against thoughtlessly breaking the commandment? The discussion led to more and more minute regulations until it was solemnly decided that a tailor's needle is a burden which he may not carry on the Sabbath, nor even late on Friday afternoon lest the Sabbath come upon him unawares while carrying it! Such regula-

tions constitute what is called sometimes the rabbinical law because made by the rabbis, but more often the oral law because it was not put in writing but handed down, as "the tradition of the elders" (Mark 7:3), by word of mouth from one generation of lawyers to another. In the time of Jesus the oral law had become of vast size; and its devotees considered it to be more sacred than even the written law.

Closely connected but by no means identical with the scribes were the Pharisees. These were men who devoted their lives to keeping every minutest command of both the written and the oral law as the scribes directed. They formed a fraternity with special vows, and held themselves proudly aloof from the mass of the people (John 7:47-49). It was because of this attitude that they were called Pharisees, which means "the separated," and at first may have been a nickname, like Puritan. Their doctrines were those of orthodox Judaism (Matt. 23:2) as it had developed since the Exile; and while they were never a large body (Josephus says that in the early days of Herod their number was somewhat above 6,000) their influence was great because the people generally revered them as holy men, and considered their life to be the ideal one. This fact justifies the statement of Montefiore, "It is probably no exaggeration to say that five-sixths of the nation were Pharisaic more or less; though where and how the limits ran, it is hard to say." Their devotion to the law was inspired by patriotism as well as by religious zeal; for they believed that whenever the law was kept perfectly, the Messiah would come and set up his reign. Meanwhile, as regards the rule of the Romans, most of them held that it must be patiently endured as a just punishment for the sins of



the nation, until the foreordained day when God should remove it. The word Pharisee has become a synonym for formalist and hypocrite; and most persons would justify this by the accounts in the New Testament, forgetting that among the New Testament Pharisees were such men as Nicodemus, Gamaliel and Saul of Tarsus. Undoubtedly an emphasis of the outward forms of religion often caused the Pharisees to forget the inward spirit; and they grew narrow, censorious, self-righteous and conceited. Yet this was not the case with all. The motive which inspired such rigorous and painful legalism was a praiseworthy desire to serve God in each slightest act of life; and the best of the Pharisees must be classed among the best of the Jews.

While the development and observance of the law absorbed the energy of the devoutest Jews, and was their greatest achievement, there were always some who opposed them. And the leaders of the opposition were the chief priests. This surprises us at first thought, yet the reasons are simple. Now that there was no longer a king, the chief priests considered themselves the rulers of the nation, and were jealous of the increasing influence of the scribes and Pharisees. Their position was secured by birth, and they disliked to see honors heaped upon men who had risen from the ranks of the common people. They had the riches of the temple at their command, and were inclined to indulge in luxuries and amusements condemned by the stricter Jews. Above all, they wished to do away with the regulations that separated the Jews from their heathen neighbors, making them a peculiar and generally despised people. Of course, they had no desire to abolish the temple worship, since it was the source of

their own authority and wealth; but if the people should incline to transfer the temple worship from Jehovah to some more widely recognized and less austere divinity, such a change had evident advantages. This attitude of the chief priests towards the law, especially the oral law, was shared by many of the other wealthy families; and collectively they constituted the party which from the time of the Maccabees was called the Sadducees. The name probably is derived from Zadok, a priest in the days of David, from whom the chief priests claimed their special authority. It is needless to say that the common priests generally were not Sadducees; indeed, some of them were Pharisees.

Since the opposition of the Sadducees to the oral law and to those who emphasized it was not at all on religious grounds, and since their ambitions were wholly worldly, they hardly deserve to be called a religious sect. They were aristocrats, who in politics sought to keep on comfortable terms with the Roman authorities because otherwise they would lose their power, and in religion believed in maintaining the old established forms of worship because otherwise they would lose their wealth. They did lose both when Jerusalem with the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D.; after that event the Pharisees grew even more strong, but the Sadducees disappeared forever.

In the writings of Josephus and of Philo is found an elaborate account of the Essenes. We call them a sect; but they more closely resembled a monastic order, for they mostly lived in celibate communities, into which members were received, after a period of probation, upon taking a most solemn oath; they shared all possessions in common; and they observed strict rules of personal purity, daily labor,—mainly in agricul-

ture,—common meals and the like. Their doctrines are not well known, but seem to have been partly Jewish of the extreme Pharisaic type and partly Pythagorean or perhaps Zoroastrian. The principal communities were in the wilderness west of the Dead Sea, but Essenes could be found elsewhere in Palestine,—especially in the villages. As they are not mentioned in the Gospels, the chief reason for mentioning them here is the fact that some scholars maintain that John the Baptist was taught by them, and in turn passed on their teachings to Jesus. But when we consider that the Essenes were ascetics who withdrew from the world, held their doctrines secret, emphasized ceremonial purity, denied any resurrection, and kept the Sabbath more strictly than did the Pharisees, it is evident that in spirit they were widely separated from the founder of the Christian religion. Nevertheless the existence of such a sect is noteworthy as indicating a measure of dissatisfaction with the current religious life, and of yearning for something purer and more truly spiritual. The search after God which led these Essenes to a quietistic life in the wilderness was prompted by the same impulse that later on led disciples to John and to his great successor.

All these sects,—the Essenes, Sadducees, Pharisees, Herodians and Zealots,—formed only a fraction of the Jewish people. The great majority of the priests were poor, obscure and devout, and were treated with contempt and even cruelty by the Sadducees. And the common people, though they might look up with reverence to the Pharisees, were neither able nor desirous to take upon themselves the tremendous burden of the traditional law. Yet it was among these humble priests and “ this multitude that knoweth not the law ” that the

warnings of John the Baptist and the invitations of Jesus found most responsive hearers.

### 3. The Temple and the Feasts.

One of the famous buildings of antiquity, which even Gentiles came from a distance to behold, was the temple in Jerusalem. It was begun by Herod in the eighteenth year of his reign, 20-19 B.C., and the main part was completed in less than two years; but work upon various portions went on long after Herod's death. In the days of Christ's public ministry it was still building (John 2:20), and it was not wholly completed until just before the rebellion of 66-70 A.D. which brought about its destruction. Herod was passionately fond of building; and in removing the shabby old temple of Zerubbabel and replacing it with this splendid edifice, he was influenced more by his own pleasure and glory than by the religion of the Jews.

The temple, in the usual sense of the term, was not a single building, but a great group of buildings and open courts and covered porches or porticoes. The sacred heart of it all was the House, entered from a porch at the east and having two divisions, the Holy Place or Sanctuary and beyond this the Holy of Holies. The latter, screened by a heavy veil which was lifted only once a year when the highpriest entered on the Day of Atonement, was now empty, save for the great stone on which once the ark with its mercy seat had rested. In the Holy Place stood the altar of incense, with the table of shew-bread on the north side and the golden candlestick on the south. In front of the House, in a court which only priests might enter, stood a huge stone altar for burnt offerings and, towards the south, an immense laver of brass, filled every morning with

water. In this Court of the Priests the animals were killed and offered as sacrifices. Surrounding this court, with its main entrance on the east, was the narrow Court of the Men of Israel, where the male worshippers might stand and share in the service; east of this was the larger Court of the Women, which was used by both sexes, and contained special chambers for lepers, Nazarites and others, and where were the trumpet-shaped boxes into which worshippers cast their money offerings. All this part of the temple was so sacred that no Gentile could enter it under penalty of death; and the punishment for violating its sanctity was the only death penalty the Jews might execute upon even a Roman without asking permission from the procurator. Enclosing this sacred part of the temple was a great court, open to visitors of any race, and hence called the Court of the Gentiles. Here, in the time of Christ, cattle, doves and other sacrificial offerings were exposed for sale to the worshippers, and the tables of the money changers were placed. Broad covered porches, of which the one on the east was called Solomon's Porch (John 10:23), formed the outer limits of the Court of the Gentiles, and were convenient shelters in stormy weather and meeting places for discussion or instruction. The exact size and shape of all these various parts of the temple, and the location and use of the various chambers and rooms that were to be found in them, are subjects most intricate and uncertain. Fortunately they are not of importance for our present purpose.

The temple and the worship were under the care of the priests and their assistants, the Levites. Many of these lived in Jerusalem or its vicinity; the rest were scattered throughout Palestine, though naturally the



majority of them lived in Judea. They were divided into twenty-four "courses," each of which was on duty for a week (Luke 1: 5, 8). At the head of all was the highpriest, who alone could perform certain sacred offices, but whose position now was far more political than religious. The highpriesthood in early days was hereditary and for life; but Herod and the Romans appointed the highpriest and deposed him as they pleased, though the appointment could be only from certain families. Members of these families, and especially the ex-highpriests, are probably the persons called "chief priests." Certain tithes, offerings and parts of offerings were the portion of the priests for their own support.

The morning and the evening sacrifice offered for the whole nation, and the constant succession of sacrifices offered for private worshippers, kept the priests occupied and the temple courts thronged from sunrise to sunset every day. But on the feast days the crowd and the activities were vastly increased. There were three great annual feasts which all adult male Jews living within fifteen miles of Jerusalem, and not ceremonially unclean, were obliged to attend; and to which there came voluntarily great numbers, including many women, from other parts of Palestine and from foreign lands. These three feasts were the Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. The precise date of each varied from year to year because the Jewish year was made up of twelve lunar months of twenty-nine or thirty days each, with a thirteenth month added about every third year to avoid too great variation from the solar year. We can most easily recognize how the date of a feast varied, by remembering that our Good Friday is the successor of the Passover, and shifts

back and forward in the calendar after the same fashion. The Jewish day began at sunset instead of midnight; and the Jewish ecclesiastical year began in the spring with the month Nisan, while the civil year began in the autumn with the month Tishri.

A list of all the feasts and the one great fast (the Day of Atonement), with the Jewish month and day and the approximate time according to our calendar is as follows:

Passover, Nisan 14-21,—early in April,

Pentecost, Sivan 6,—last of May,

Trumpets, Tishri 1,—last of September,

Day of Atonement, Tishri 10,—early in October,

Tabernacles, Tishri 15-22,—middle of October,

Dedication, Kislev 25,—last of December.

Purim, Adar 14,—early in March.

To these should be added the Feast of the New Moon which was observed on the first day of each month. The meaning and details of these feasts, so far as they bear on the life of Christ, will be considered later on.

To the ancient Jew the temple and its services were full of religious associations and most helpful for spiritual life; to us, if we could behold them, they would be almost the reverse. The scene in the Court of the Gentiles, where worshippers were leading cattle to be slain, or returning with portions of raw meat for their own later consumption, where bargaining for articles needed in the sacrifices or in the offerings was constantly going on, where learned rabbis were holding forth upon matters of the law to eager groups of hearers, and where strangers of all nationalities were curiously staring about and asking questions,—all this would seem more like a fair than like a sanctuary. And especially the Court of the Priests,—with its

knives for slaying the animals, its hooks by which the carcasses were suspended while being skinned and disemboweled, its drains for carrying away the blood and offal, its altar for burning the flesh, its laver full of water for washing and flushing,—this, even when no sacrifices were being offered, and still more when the great company of priests and Levites were strenuously pushing forward their bloody work, would remind us so strongly of a slaughter-house that we could hardly realize we were in the house of God.

No such impressions filled the mind of the Jewish worshipper; and yet, in the time of Christ, the temple had ceased to be for him what it was for his fathers. Foreign conquerors had repeatedly desecrated it; the ark and the shekinah had disappeared; the highpriest was appointed and removed at the pleasure of the Romans; the leading priests were greedy and corrupt; the present building was a monument to the heathen Herod:—did Jehovah any longer dwell in its courts, or take pleasure in its sacrifices? Magnificent as it was, and elaborate as was its ritual, did it not really deserve the condemnation which Malachi pronounced in days of former degeneracy? Such thoughts troubled the devout seeker after God, and made him dimly feel that real communion was to be found in the closet and the synagogue rather than in the temple.

#### 4. The Synagogue and its Worship.

The synagogue seems to have originated among the Jews in Babylon during the Exile when they met in private houses (e.g., in Ezekiel's) for instruction and such forms of worship as could be observed without temple or altar. Finding these meetings most profitable they continued them in buildings erected for the pur-

pose after their return to Palestine. The increasing emphasis of the law helped the growth of synagogues; for the main purpose of the synagogue is not worship but instruction in the law. In the time of Christ one or more synagogues stood in every city and town of Palestine; and they were also to be found outside of Palestine in every place where Jews abounded. At least ten men must be present at any service that it might be properly conducted.

The synagogue building would be cheap or costly according to the means of the worshippers. It usually was placed so that the congregation faced towards Jerusalem. Before them, at the end of the building was the ark, i.e., a chest or closet containing the rolls of sacred scripture, each in a linen case. In front of the ark was a curtain, and before it a lamp, always burning. Next were the "chief seats" for the elders and Pharisees, who sat facing the congregation. Then came the reading desk on a raised platform, fronting the main body of worshippers. Probably the women were separated from the men, as in modern Oriental churches; in which case they may often have occupied a screened gallery.

In a Jewish town, as we have noted, all matters, political and religious, would be in the hands of a council (sanhedrin) of the older leading men, the elders. These in a general way would have control of the synagogue. Most specially, they would determine who might share its privileges, and who should suffer punishment by scourging or by excommunication, i.e., "casting out of the synagogue" (John 9: 22). The latter was a bitter punishment as it made the person a civil and social pariah. They would also appoint the special officers of the synagogue, viz.:

1). The ruler of the synagogue (Luke 13:14; 8:41). He had the general supervision of the synagogue and its services, and selected at each meeting those who were to take part in the service. (Possibly a synagogue sometimes had more than one ruler; see Acts 13:15.)

2). The chazzan or attendant (Luke 4:20). His duties were somewhat like those of our modern sexton but, of course, more highly esteemed. He had charge of the sacred books and the building; he administered the scourgings; and probably he was the village school-teacher.

3). The almoners, who collected and distributed the alms.

Services were held in the synagogue on Sabbath (Saturday) mornings and each feast day; less formal services were held on Sabbath afternoons, Mondays and Thursdays. The order of the service was somewhat as follows:—

1. The Shema,—the recitation in unison of (Deut. 6:4-9, 11:13-21, Num. 15:37-41) with certain benedictions preceding and following.

2. Prayers, with responses by the people, all standing. In later days, and probably in the time of Christ, the prayers were of fixed form,—i.e., liturgical.

3. Scripture reading, by various persons selected by the ruler. The lessons were first from the law, a special portion being assigned for each Sabbath, and next from the prophets, a free selection. The reading was in Hebrew; but accompanying it was a translation (targum) into Aramaic.

4. Address, by some person or persons selected by the ruler (Acts 13:15). The readers stood; the speakers sat (Luke 4:20).



5. Benediction. This was by a priest; if none was present, it was turned into a prayer.

Note that there was no person corresponding to our modern minister, and that there was no provision for reading the other portions of the Old Testament ("the Hagiographa"), though certain selections from these were appointed for various feast-days.

In the time of Christ the synagogue controlled by scribes and Pharisees, rather than the temple controlled by priests, was the real center of Jewish religious thought and life. In Gentile lands it not only held the Jews together, but also attracted many devout Gentiles to its services and thus to Judaism or later to Christianity. It gave Jesus, and still more the early Christian evangelists, a preaching place. And its services were the model for primitive Christian church worship and thus for our present church worship.

## II

### THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS OF THE JEWS

**B**ECAUSE the Jewish sacred books form the Old Testament of our Bible, the religious ideas of the times in which they were written are familiar. But between the completion of the Old Testament and the time of Christ a period intervenes in which many of these ideas received further development and new ideas were added. To understand the religion of the Jews among whom Jesus lived and taught we must, therefore, supplement our knowledge gained from the Old Testament with some information concerning the later course of thought.

One source for this is the Old Testament Apocrypha,—that group of books which found a place in the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures (the Septuagint), and was held inspired by all the Jews except the strictest in Palestine itself. A more abundant source of information is the writings known as the Jewish Apocalypses. These were not deemed sacred, but were popular in the days of Christ, and shaped Jewish religious thought somewhat as “Paradise Lost” and “Pilgrim’s Progress” shaped English religious thought. It is only in recent years that this apocalyptic literature has been carefully studied; indeed, some of its books were until recently unknown, and many things concerning them and their relation to the teachings of Jesus are still matters of debate

and investigation. To describe them, or even give a list of them, would be unnecessary here. Their general character and peculiarities may be indicated by pointing to the Book of Daniel and the Revelation of St. John, both of which are apocalyptic writings. The question that alone concerns our present study is, What has been learned from all sources about the religious ideas of the Jews in the time of Christ?

## 1. God and the Law.

We begin with the idea of God, since this idea shapes the whole of any religion. Before the exile the Jews were prone to polytheism and idolatry; after the exile there was no more of either. (The sojourn as captives in a land of strange gods and monstrous idols was a discipline that made those who endured it without giving up their religion firm believers in the sole supremacy of Jehovah and the vanity of idols.) Later centuries steadily increased the recognition of God's omnipotence and spirituality, but greatly diminished the old feeling of His nearness and sympathy. He became a monarch and a judge rather than a friend and a counsellor. He was thought to be too exalted and holy to come into direct relations with the earth and men; so the doctrine grew that angels are His intermediaries to bear His messages, to execute His demands, to rule over nations and watch over individuals. In proportion as God's power and unchanging will were emphasized, the belief arose that the whole course of human history is unalterably fixed by Him from the beginning, and that man has no power of choice in determining his fate. The Sadducees, who in religion were conservatives,—so far as they were anything,—refused to accept these new doctrines of angels and

foreordination; but the Pharisees advocated them and made them popular.

If God is a lawgiver and a judge, the duty of man is to keep His law, thereby securing His rewards and escaping His punishments. Such a view is consistent with a high spiritual life, if the law is that which is written upon the heart rather than upon tables of stone, if the motive power for obeying it is love, and if the reward for obedience is entrance into sympathetic companionship with God. But the law that the scribes emphasized and developed was something far different. It was largely external,—a matter of forms and ceremonies, of meats clean and unclean, of sacred days and places and persons, of acts forbidden and allowed, of relations between the circumcised and the uncircumcised. An attempt was made to provide a rule for every possible action, and thus cover the whole of life with definite ordinances. Acts were more important than feelings and motives; strict conformance was better than justice and mercy.

This is well illustrated by the Sabbath laws. No institution was more prized by the Jews than the Sabbath; they gloried in it as their peculiar possession, and multiplied laws to secure its strict observance. But Sabbath-keeping, as the scribes taught it, was mainly abstinence from everything that in any degree resembled week-day occupations. A deed of mercy like dressing a wound, a deed of charity like preparing food for the hungry, a deed of necessity like extinguishing a fire, must not be performed because it involved labor. There was nothing spiritual in such a Sabbath; a man might keep the day in perfect obedience to the law, and yet have a heart full of malice, envy and pride. And there was nothing elevating to the soul in such obedi-

ence; in fact, a Sabbath spent in the trammels of a host of petty rules was drudgery and not a delight.

The laws of the scribes were largely prohibitions,—“Touch not: taste not: handle not.” Even the Golden Rule which Hillel, one of the best of the teachers, proclaimed, was (like that of Confucius) in the negative form, “Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you.” Restraint rather than development was the keynote of the religious life; passive virtues were most cultivated. The special acts with which God is well-pleased,—the “righteousness” of Matt. 6: 1,—were prayer, fasting and alms-giving. Prayer was to be offered twice a day, in the morning and evening; it was a formal matter, and a rabbi was expected to teach his students how to pray (Luke 11: 1). The ancient law prescribed one annual fast,—the Day of Atonement; but other fast-days were added after the Exile; and the mere act of fasting was considered so meritorious that the Pharisees fasted on each Monday and Thursday (Luke 18: 12). Alms-giving was a part of the synagogue service, and was a way of gaining credit rather than an expression of sympathy with the poor.

Formalism in religion tends to produce self-satisfaction. No matter how elaborate any code of ceremonies and observances, by strenuous effort it may be completely carried out; and when that is done, the goal is reached,—nothing lies beyond. The man who has achieved this external perfection counts himself acceptable to God; and his attitude towards those who fail to reach his standard is apt to be one of contempt and censure. While the Jews despised the Gentiles as people who had no law, the Pharisees in turn despised all other Jews as people who knew not the law (John



7:49). They are well described in the preface to the parable of the Pharisee and the publican as those "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought" (Luke 18:9). Evidently a man who undertook to keep the law could do little else. From many occupations he was completely barred because they involved ceremonial defilement; and for the rest he would have little time after he had finished the prayers, the ablutions, the attendance upon synagogue or temple services, and all the observances he deemed of first importance. A poor man could hardly earn his living and also be religious; so when Jesus once declared that a rich man enters the kingdom of God with difficulty, the disciples felt they had good reason for asking, "Then who can be saved?" (Mark 10:26).

Though the people generally looked upon the Pharisee as a saint, and though the Jews as a nation were exceedingly zealous for the law, we must not imagine there were no exceptions. On the one hand, were some who, like the Sadducees, held their religion lightly, or wholly abandoned it, through the influence of heathen thought and life. We know that even at Jerusalem, which was the very center of legalism, Herod the Great built a theatre and an amphitheatre, and celebrated games in honor of Augustus, which would have been impossible if a portion of the people had not been willing to break over the barriers of the law. And on the other hand, there were noble souls, some among the prominent leaders and many among the obscure people, who held a more spiritual view of religion, and a kinder attitude towards those who were not of their own faith. The teachings of the prophets and the outpourings of the Psalms were the food that nourished

these souls; and for them the law was a joy and privilege rather than a burden because it was given by a gracious God who in these ordinances placed before His chosen people the way of outward prosperity and inward peace.

## 2. The Messianic Hope.

The most remarkable thing about the Jews from the Exile to the present day is that they have maintained their distinct existence through centuries of oppression and helplessness which would have obliterated any other people. This is explained by the fact that while the Golden Age of other nations lies in the past, that of the Jews has ever been in the future—they have been saved by hope. They have constantly looked forward to the Messianic Age, and confidently expected that it speedily would dawn.

To give the history of the Messianic hope would be to rehearse the whole history and thought of the Jews; for, not only did that hope exist and develop all through the centuries, but its precise form at different periods was shaped by contemporary conditions and current ideas. The Messianic Age, in the widest sense of the term, is the glorious time when, through the favor of Jehovah, all the desires of His people, Israel, shall be satisfied. Because the Jews were usually a subject nation and without a strong leader, their most persistent desire was for a king who would crush their foes and achieve an independent kingdom. Such a king must be the chosen agent of God; accordingly he is called the Messiah (the Christ) which means the Anointed (Ps. 2 : 2), i.e., the one whom God has placed on the throne; or, because in him is fulfilled Jehovah's promise to David concerning some descendant, "I will

be his father, and he shall be my son " (2 Sam. 7: 14), he is called,—at least in later days and especially in the time of Jesus,—the Son of God.

The Messianic hope was usually for the coming of a personal Messiah and the establishment of his kingdom,—the kingdom of God. But there were periods when the Jews had independence, or enough of liberty to satisfy them; then they ceased to yearn for a future kingdom: and there were periods when they were content with their present leaders; then they ceased to desire a Messiah. Still the present was never so ideal as to destroy all longing for a better future. Sickness and suffering made them yearn for a day when physical ills would disappear; the barrenness of Judea's hills set them to dreaming of a time when the ground would bring forth abundantly with little or no labor; the contempt of other nations created an emphasis of a glorious day when all nations would stream as humble learners to the temple at Jerusalem. Whenever national events aroused a feeling of sin and impurity, the hope was for purification and spiritual blessings; but when religion grew dead, such higher aspirations were exchanged for more sensuous and selfish desires. And sometimes all hope of Jehovah's blessing almost disappeared, either through long delay and frequent disappointment, or through the lack of earnest preachers to rouse the nation from apathy.

At the period we are to study, the thoughts of the Jews were centered upon the Messianic hope more strongly, perhaps, than at any time before or since. The brief taste of liberty and power under the Maccabees was too recent to be forgotten, and stirred up a clamorous appetite for more. The Sadducees, who had come back into positions of authority after the death

of Herod, were well content with Rome's dominion; but the Pharisees and the people generally were longing and hoping for release from it through the establishment of the kingdom of God. The conception of the course of events by which this kingdom would be established differed in degrees of the supernatural. The opinion of some was that the expected Messiah would be a purely human descendant of David who would lead the people against the Romans and, with divine aid, drive them out. When firmly established upon his throne, he would extend his dominion farther even than did his great ancestor; the Jews in foreign lands would come back and make Jerusalem and Palestine populous and prosperous; and through the blessings of Jehovah life would become easy and delightful. All this would take place when the people were prepared for their king (Luke 1:17); their present unbelief and failure to keep the law were what delayed his coming. These Messianic ideas were taken mainly from the Old Testament prophecies.

— There was another conception,—found in portions of the Old Testament and elaborated in later apocalyptic literature,—that involved a larger degree of the supernatural, and a universal view of the world and its destiny. According to this the present time was the close of one great age or æon of history, an age filled with suffering and unrighteousness, and dominated by the powers of evil. The final scenes in this age were to be a seeming triumph of Satan accompanied with direst calamities, portents and prodigies. Wars, earthquakes, famines, signs in the heavens, horrors, and catastrophies unspeakable, mark the near end of the present evil world and the approach of the world to come. Then follows the judgment,—the Day of the

Lord,—when the kingdom of Satan is overthrown, his followers are sentenced to punishment according to their deeds, the world is purified from sin and its effects so as to be a delightful habitation for the saints, and the faithful inherit it. Not only those who are alive at that day but also the dead, coming forth from their graves, share in the punishments and the rewards. Because of its emphasis of eschatology (the doctrine of “the last things”), this conception of the kingdom of God is usually called the eschatological.

In some of the apocalypses there is no mention of the Messiah; the final victory over Satan and evil is the direct work of God and His angels. In other apocalypses the Messiah is God’s agent and representative in the victory; but his part is as supernatural as the rest. He is not a man, but a pre-existent, super-human being who comes suddenly, mysteriously, in the clouds of heaven, to work miracles, overthrow all enemies, pronounce the divine sentence upon the wicked, and rule over not only the Jews but the whole world. Elijah, returning from the spirit world, is his forerunner; and angels are his attendants and armed host.

Evidently the prophetic and the apocalyptic conceptions of the Messianic Age cannot be joined in one harmonious scheme; and doubtless various elements of each were held confusedly by most Jews. In fact, the question, What did the Jews in the first century think concerning the coming of Christ? is no more capable of a single answer than the similar question, What do Christians today think concerning the second coming of Christ?

The Samaritans, also, were expecting the Messiah; but we know little about their Messianic ideas. From the fact that they accepted only the Pentateuch as



sacred scriptures, and had remained free from the influence of later prophetic and apocalyptic teachings, we infer that their thought of the Messiah was a simple, primitive one. In Deut. 18: 18 Jehovah says to Moses, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words into his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." Relying on this promise the Samaritans seem to have expected as their Messiah a second Moses whose chief work would be that of a religious teacher. This was the expectation set forth by the Samaritan woman in her talk with Jesus (John 4: 25); and her reason for believing Him to be the Messiah was, He "told me all things that ever I did."

The formalism, legalism and hypocrisy, which hindered the work of Jesus and compassed His death, make themselves so prominent in the gospel story, that we are disposed to conclude they were the characteristic features of Jewish religious life in His day, and true religion was dying or actually dead. This is a mistake. Toy says, "It was by no means a religiously torpid age; on the contrary, there is reason to believe that there was a well-defined feeling of discontentment in the best minds:—a desire for something purer and higher than had yet been attained." And Sanday states this still more strongly: "Perhaps at no time, either before or since, has there been so much aspiration, so much ardent longing for a future in which God should reign more visibly and triumphantly than ever in the past. In this attitude of intense expectation culminated the preparation in history for the coming of Christ; it was in the midst of it that He came, and to it that He appealed."

### III

## THE BIRTH OF JESUS

**T**HE story of the birth of Jesus, as the Christian church for centuries has told it, is as follows:—

In the days of Herod the Great there lived in Nazareth two descendants of David, a maiden named Mary and the man to whom she was betrothed, Joseph. Before their marriage the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, and announced that she would be the mother of a divine child, the Messiah, and that her aged kinswoman, Elizabeth, was soon to bear a son. Thereupon Mary made a journey to the home of Elizabeth in Judea, and abode with her about three months, the two women rejoicing together over the favor of God vouchsafed to them. After her return, and when it was evident that she was to become a mother, Joseph planned to break the betrothal ties; but being assured in a dream that Mary was pure and the child divine, he married her.

The requirement that a census list be made of all citizens, each in his own city, caused Joseph and Mary to make a journey to Bethlehem. The village khan was filled with strangers; so they lodged in a place,—tradition says a cave,—where cattle were kept, and there the child was born and cradled in a manger. The same night certain shepherds sought them out, with the wonderful news that while watching their flocks in the fields they had been told by an angel that the new-born

Messiah was lying in a manger at Bethlehem, and they had heard a great chorus of angels celebrating His birth. Moved by all this, Joseph, instead of returning to Nazareth, decided to rear his child in the town of his ancestor, and secured a house as a home. On the eighth day, according to the regular Jewish custom, the child was circumcised and named Jesus,—the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, which means “Jehovah is salvation.” At the end of forty days the parents with Jesus went up to Jerusalem that Mary might make the humble offering of two doves for her purification from child-birth, and that they might also pay the five shekels which were given the Lord in redemption of a firstborn son. While in the temple Simeon and Anna, two aged persons of devout spirit, greeted the child and bore testimony to His Messiahship. Later on magi from the East arrived in Jerusalem, who told Herod they had seen a star heralding the birth of a king of the Jews, and wished to know where He was that they might worship Him. Herod sent them to Bethlehem because prophecy declared the Messiah would be born in the city of David; and he asked them to report, if they found the child, that he, too, might worship Him. Guided by the star the Magi came to the house of Joseph, where they worshipped the child, and gave gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh; then, warned by a dream not to return to Herod because he sought to destroy Him, they went by another way to their own country. In rage Herod ordered that all male children under two years of age in Bethlehem and its vicinity be put to death; but Joseph was informed of this by another dream, and fled into Egypt with the mother and her child. There he remained until Herod’s death, when the command came through

a dream to return to Palestine. He obeyed, intending to resume his life in Bethlehem; but fearing Herod's son, Archelaus, and guided by a dream, he went to Nazareth and dwelt there.

### 1. Discrepancies between the two Narratives.

This story is formed by dove-tailing together the accounts in Matthew and Luke. The two have little in common,—only the facts that Mary was betrothed to Joseph, that before their marriage she divinely conceived a child whose name was to be Jesus, and that the child was born in Bethlehem and reared in Nazareth. Evidently the two evangelists drew their information from wholly distinct sources; but what these were we cannot tell. The sudden change in Luke's style when he passes from his preface to the story would indicate that his source was an Aramaic document, perhaps one of the narratives to which he refers in his preface; and Sanday thinks these opening chapters "essentially the most archaic thing in the New Testament." Some hold that Matthew's source, also, was a written one. The story in Matthew is told from Joseph's standpoint,—absolutely nothing is said of Mary's thoughts or emotions or independent acts; the story in Luke is just the reverse,—Mary is the central figure, and her inner life is delicately and touchingly disclosed. This leads to the conjecture that in some way Matthew's story came from Joseph, and Luke's story from Mary: but how, remains unexplained.

It is often said that the two narratives do not agree; yet, with one exception, all the alleged discrepancies arise, not from what is stated, but from what might be inferred, if one account stood alone. For example, if we had only Matthew, we might suppose Joseph to

have been a householder in Bethlehem, who never thought of living in Nazareth until after the return from Egypt; while from Luke alone we should conclude that the visit to Bethlehem was as brief as possible, and the temple visit was made on the homeward journey to Nazareth. As a matter of fact, when the two accounts are taken together, they not only form an harmonious narrative but throw light each upon the other. Joseph's attitude towards Mary, as revealed in Luke, is explained by what is told in Matthew; and the choice of Nazareth for a home when Bethlehem is unsafe, though told in Matthew, becomes intelligible through Luke. Such mutual corroboration by two independent narratives is a proof of their common truthfulness.

The genealogical tables, however, present a real difficulty: Why is it that the one in Matthew differs so greatly from the one in Luke? From very early times various explanations have been proposed, e.g., that one table gives Joseph's natural descent from David, while the other gives his legal descent through a levirate marriage (i.e., the Jewish custom of taking the widow of a childless brother, and reckoning her first son to be the brother's child); again, that one table gives Joseph's natural descent, and the other the line through which the title to David's throne came to him; again, that one table gives the ancestry of Joseph, the other that of Mary. The modern inclination is to make no attempt to reconcile the two, but simply to accept them as two different accounts of Joseph's lineage, which the evangelists found and incorporated in their two narratives.



## 2. Credibility of the Story.

Granting that the accounts in Matthew and Luke can be framed into a consistent narrative, there are still many difficulties in accepting the narrative as trustworthy. A recognition of the deity of Jesus, however, removes one frequent objection, viz.: that a virgin birth is a miracle and therefore incredible. The law of human birth necessitates a human father, and if Jesus was only a man, His birth would be a miracle: but we know nothing about the law of the birth of a Godman; and if it is evident from His character, life, teachings and influence that Jesus was divine, then His entrance into the world may be just as natural, so to speak, as the rest of His earthly career. For this reason the term "the miraculous conception," though often used, is objectionable; it is better to avoid it and use instead the simply descriptive term, "the virgin birth."

The fact that nowhere else except in the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke is the virgin birth even alluded to, is puzzling. We can understand why Mark begins his gospel with the preaching of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus: he was reproducing the story Peter used to tell for evangelistic purposes; and the virgin birth is not a theme for the opening message of a missionary. So, too, John's silence may be explained by the fact that his gospel was largely supplementary, and there was no need to tell the story again. Indeed, his silence may be used as an argument for the truth of the story; since, had he believed it untrue, he would have taken pains to deny it, even as he did deny the erroneous report that Jesus had said John would not die before the Second Coming. But why are the epistles wholly silent, even in passages where

a reference to the virgin birth would seem most natural and helpful? The only answer is that the story was not generally told, and was guarded as a precious mystery by those who knew it. We shall presently note some reasons why it could not be proclaimed to churches made up of recent converts from heathen beliefs.

The attitude of Mary and the brothers of Jesus in later years seems inconsistent with a knowledge that He was the Son of God. This is best discussed in connection with their part in His public ministry; we shall consider it presently.

Probably to most minds the crowning difficulty in accepting the story is its strong resemblance to the legends which in those days gathered around the birth of almost all famous characters. The divine fatherhood, the prophecies of future greatness, the heavenly visitants, the star, the perils threatening the young child's life,—each of these is paralleled somewhere in the stories of the Buddha and other religious teachers, or of Alexander and Caesar and other conquerors and kings. If we reject them contemptuously when recorded by heathen writers, why should we accept them when told by the evangelists?

The story of the birth of Buddha, which is the one most similar to that of Jesus, may be explained as growing out of the contact of Buddhism with Christianity. It is found only in later Buddhist books, and is not at all in harmony with the early form of Buddhist teachings in which the supernatural is strictly excluded. And as regards other stories we may properly protest against the method of wandering through all heathen mythology, and gathering at haphazard every item that bears a superficial resemblance to the

Christian belief, in proof that the two are identical and equally worthless.

Heathen parallels are of little value unless we can show how Christian thought came to reproduce them; and this is not an easy task. The theory that the birth-story was borrowed from the heathen is confronted with the fact that heathen life and thought were most repulsive to the early Christians, who sought in every way to avoid them. One probable reason why those who knew about the birth of Jesus refrained from telling it publicly was the fear that it might be understood as a parallel to heathen stories. The theory that the story was not borrowed but arose in Christian circles from the same tendencies that produced the heathen stories fails to recognize how totally the Christian thought of God and His relation to the world differed from heathen thought. On the one hand the Greek and Roman deities were simply glorified men, human in form and life and passions; so that it was easy to imagine their coming to earth and becoming the fathers of superhuman beings; but the God of Jewish and early Christian thought was purely spiritual, holy and distinct from man; and the description in Luke of how Mary became a mother through the power of the Most High and the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, in no respect resembles the Greek and Roman birth-stories of demigods. On the other hand, Oriental thought was pantheistic; gods and men alike were manifestations of one eternal force, and there was no distinction between the natural and the supernatural; so an incarnation presented no difficulties and signified nothing: but the Christian thought of God, though not as strongly transcendent as the Jewish, emphasized His separateness from the world. He was the creator of

heaven and earth; and that He could become incarnate was a fact most difficult to grasp. The early Christians strongly believed in the deity of Christ; but how the union of God and man in Him was possible, they did not attempt to explain. Certainly the story of a virgin birth was not one that would naturally suggest itself as they pondered on the problem.

Nevertheless, when all this has been said, the fact remains that certain of the incidents that are grouped around the birth, such as the chorus of angels heard by the shepherds, and the star that guided the magi to the cradle, seem to belong to a realm far different from that of the rest of the gospel story,—a realm of marvels rather than miracles, of fancy rather than fact. For the most part the life of Jesus is not such as human imagination would frame. A teacher sent from heaven who in boyhood sat at the feet of earthly teachers, a sinless being who had to struggle against temptation, a miracle worker who never used His power in satisfying His own wants, a king of all men who made Himself servant of all, a lord of life who gave Himself to death,—this runs so contrary to the thoughts of men that to call it the product of imagination is absurd. But some of the incidents of the birth-story are such as fancy in those days might add. And it would do this, not from a love of the marvellous,—though that was strong,—but from a desire to emphasize the truth that the incarnation was the most wondrous event in history, and that heaven as well as earth was stirred by deepest interest in it.

### 3. The Importance of the Virgin Birth.

Fortunately belief in the divinity of Jesus does not hinge upon the truth of incidents in the story, nor

even upon the fact of the virgin birth. The omission of the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke would make little difference in the New Testament picture of Christ. If our knowledge of His life began with John's baptism, we should be in the position of most of the early Christians. Nor, if we accept the virgin birth, do we gain any more light upon the way in which the human and the divine were united in Jesus. We are able to affirm that the union existed from the very inception of His earthly existence, instead of beginning at some later period, say at His baptism; but the mystery of the incarnation remains as great as before.

Conversely, belief in the virgin birth does hinge upon the divinity of Jesus. Unless we are fully persuaded that He was the one sent by the Father as the Saviour of the world, the Desire of all nations and the Lord of all realms, the story in Matthew and Luke is preposterous. But if His entrance into the world is the coming of God in the flesh, and His mission is the wonderful revelation of the love of God to sinful men, then we find it fully as hard to believe that this greatest event in the world's history was marked by nothing that transcends the level of ordinary human experience as to believe the gospel record. Indeed, the proper place for a consideration of the story of His birth is not at the beginning of a study of the life of Jesus, but at the close. After we have traced His self-revelation from the baptism to the ascension, and have found an answer to His question, "Who say ye that I am?", then, and not till then, are we really prepared to pass judgment upon the record of how He entered into the world.



#### 4. The Date of the Birth of Jesus.

It was a happy idea of Dionysius Exiguus, a learned Roman monk who died in 556 A.D., to use the year of the birth of Jesus as the era from which to reckon time; and, though the Christian world was slow to adopt it, by the tenth century,—largely through the aid of Bede and Charlemagne,—it was in general use. But his computation that the year of the birth was 754 A.U.C. was unfortunate; for, although now we know better, there is no possibility of changing the date; and we shall always have the seeming anachronism that Jesus was born somewhere in the period we call B.C.

The exact date of His birth cannot be fixed. Herod the Great died in March or April 750 A.U.C. which would be in 4 B.C.; and, if we accept Matthew's account, the birth was before this event; but there is nothing in the account to fix it more exactly, except that the child was still "young" when Joseph in Egypt was told that Herod had died. Astronomical calculations of some conjunction of planets which might seem to the magi like a new star are idle, because a star that acts as a guide and stands above the house where the child is to be found is evidently a supernatural phenomenon.

It would seem that the time could be definitely ascertained from Luke's account of the census; but no other writer mentions this census, and the difficulties in accepting Luke's statement are used against the truth of his whole narrative. There was a census taken by Quirinius in 7 A.D. or a little earlier, soon after Archelaus was deposed, when Judea was annexed to Syria with a Roman procurator in charge of the province. Luke knew about the census of 7 A.D. (see Acts 5:37);

and he seems to be carefully distinguishing this one from it by his statement, "This was the first enrollment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria." But apart from this statement by Luke we know nothing of an earlier census in Judea, though we have recently found evidence that the Roman government was accustomed to take a census of the provinces at regular intervals for the purpose of determining taxation. (In Egypt the interval was fourteen years; and one rescript commands all persons residing away from their homes to return so as to be ready for the census.) There is some evidence also that Quirinius was in Syria, perhaps as governor, for a little while shortly after Herod's death; but his connection with a census of Judea during Herod's reign is not easily explained. Possibly more data may be discovered and solve the problem; but until such discovery we can only say that in all points where there is full chance to test him (e.g., in the Book of Acts), Luke proves to be a very accurate historian; and this encourages us to believe that if we knew the facts more fully, we should find him accurate here. At present, however, the census can be of no aid in fixing the date of Jesus' birth.

There are other notes of time in the gospels that seem to promise help, but disappoint us when we test them. Luke 3:1-2 is an elaborate attempt to state definitely the year when John the Baptist began to preach; yet the only useable fact in it is that the date was "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." And here we cannot tell whether to reckon from the time when Tiberius became co-ruler with Augustus, 11 or 12 A.D., or from the death of Augustus in August, 14 A.D., when Tiberius became sole ruler. The former best fits in with our other data. Luke goes

on to tell us (3:23) that Jesus "when He began to teach was about thirty years of age." But we do not know how long John had been preaching when he baptized Jesus, nor just what age is meant by "about thirty years." It seems probable that John began preaching in the summer of A.D. 26, and that he baptized Jesus about six months later (John was about six months older than Jesus). If Jesus was then about thirty years of age, His birth may have been in 5 B.C.

John 2:20 gives another note of time. At the first Passover of Jesus' ministry, the temple had been forty-six years in building, i.e., in reaching its then stage of completion,—it was not entirely finished until 64 A.D. We know that Herod probably began building the temple in the autumn or winter of 20-19 B.C. From the autumn of 20 B.C. to the Passover of 27 A.D. would be forty-five and a half years. But we are not certain whether John's statement means that the temple was then in its forty-sixth year of building, or had completed that year; or indeed, whether the work was not then suspended, and the forty-six years refer to some earlier period. So this date does not help us greatly.

From all this data, therefore, we can draw no certain conclusion; but we shall not be far out of the way if we take 5 B.C. as the year of the birth, and also reckon that the public ministry began in the spring of 27 A.D.

As regards the day of the birth, there is no recognition of it until the end of the second century, when at the feast of Epiphany,—usually held on January 6th,—the church celebrated both the birth and the baptism and also (in the West) various other events, including the adoration by the magi. A separate celebration of the birth on December 25th was not begun

until the fourth century. Probably that date was chosen to counteract the heathen festival of the winter solstice. It was fitting that when their heathen neighbors were making merry over the turning back of the sun from its journey down the southern horizon, the Christians should hold a day of rejoicing over the coming of the Sun of Righteousness. There is nothing in the gospel story to make the date impossible; for sheep sometimes are out at pasture in the fields around Bethlehem even as late as December. But if the time for taking the census was fixed with any regard for the convenience of the people, a far better date would be October, when there comes a leisure interval after the fruit harvest is ended, and when the winter rains have not yet begun to make travel difficult. All we can say, then, about Christmas is that it was given its present place in the calendar long after the exact day of Jesus' birth had been forgotten.

## IV

### THE YEARS AT NAZARETH

**B**ETWEEN the birth in Bethlehem and the baptism in the Jordan lie thirty important years. We call them the years at Nazareth, ignoring the possibility that some may have been spent in journeyings or in labors elsewhere. Save for one brief incident they are hidden years; and though imagination loves to dwell upon them, it has produced nothing that can bear the test of being placed alongside that one incident. Accordingly this chapter in the life of Jesus can be scarcely more than a statement of what would be the usual education and employment of a Jewish boy of the period as he grew up into manhood amid Galilean environment.

#### 1. The Village of Nazareth.

The village of Nazareth lies on the northwestern slope of a small, irregular amphitheatre of hills, a few miles north of the great plain of Esdraelon. From its streets little can be seen except the valley and hillsides; but from any of the hilltops, especially from that directly behind the village, the view is one of the finest in Palestine, and has often been described. The population today is somewhat over 10,000; in the first century it probably was smaller, as there is no mention of Nazareth either in Josephus or in the Old Testament; yet the gospels always call it a city, which would imply



considerable size. Few villages are more secluded and yet more close to the full rush of the world's activities. The plain of Esdraelon has ever been one of the great highways of the world, along which the caravans of commerce and the armies of contending nations have passed, from the time of the Hittites and pharaohs to the present day. Probably more battles have been fought upon it than upon any other battle-field in the world, the latest being the battle between Napoleon and the Turks in 1799. Yet neither the rush of trade nor the din of war would disturb the town nestled among the hills close by.

Nathanael's question, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46), and the treatment of Jesus by His townsmen (Luke 4:16-30), have given rise to the opinion that Nazareth in the first century was a notoriously wicked town. If this were the case, it seems incredible that Joseph would deliberately choose the place for his own home and for the rearing of the child. And there is no ground for such ill opinion. Nathanael was simply expressing surprise or incredulity that the Messiah came from Galilee (cf. John 7:41, 52); and the excitement and indignation with which the men of Nazareth met Jesus' claims is rather to their credit, if they deemed Him an impostor and blasphemer. There is some reason for believing that Nazareth was a priest-town, i.e., that here the priests living in that vicinity used to assemble to go up to Jerusalem together for their week of service, while those who were unable to go, because of infirmity or ceremonial uncleanness, spent the week here in fasting and prayer. If this was so, the town would be considered one of the more sacred places, and the influence of these priests would be felt by all its inhabitants.

Nazareth was better located than Bethlehem for the training of the child Jesus. It was in the freer atmosphere of Galilee where the synagogue rather than the temple dominated life, and where there was more of quickening contact with the thought and work of the Gentile world. The town was secluded and yet close to the great current of active life,—a nursery separated only by a curtain from the living-room of the home.

## 2. The Home in Nazareth.

Joseph was a "carpenter" (Matt. 13:55), and Jesus Himself followed the same occupation (Mark 6:3). The Greek word translated carpenter means literally an artisan, a worker in wood or leather or metal. Justin Martyr says Jesus made yokes and plows, both of which in Palestine are of wood. That Joseph was a poor man is doubtless true, since Mary in her purification offered for the burnt offering a dove (Luke 2:24), which the poor were allowed to substitute for a lamb (Lev. 12:8). But there is no reason to suppose that he was depressingly poor, or that there was much difference between his condition and that of his neighbors. Life in a country town in Galilee would be without sharp contrasts in wealth or social rank. Moreover, to emphasize the poverty of Jesus as a burden taken upon Him for our sakes, is to fail to realize the depth of the meaning in II Cor. 8:9, "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich."

Life in Palestine was probably much the same in the first century as it is today. The average home is a stone building of one story with a flat roof, made of rough beams covered with rushes or brush on which is laid a coating of earth or mortar, which might easily

be broken up (Mark 2:4). It has but one or two rooms; there is no chimney; and the window is simply an opening with a wooden shutter. The furniture is very simple,—a low table, a few rude chairs, some mats which serve as beds by night and are rolled up and put away by day, perhaps a bench or divan along the wall, an olive-oil lamp in a niche, some jars to hold water, grain or other stores, some dishes, jugs, water-pots, and a brazier in which a little wood or charcoal is burned for heat and cooking. The homes of the wealthy are, of course, much more elaborate, generally with an open court in the center and rooms opening out of it, and with guest-rooms built on the flat roof (Mark 14:15).

Jewish home life was, as compared with that of other nations, unusually pure and attractive. Though polygamy was allowed, especially in the case of a childless wife or deceased brother's widow, it was unusual. Marriage took place early (rarely later than at the age of twenty for the man); and betrothal was as binding as marriage, i.e., to dissolve a betrothal required a regular divorce proceeding, and unchastity in this relation was the same as adultery. Divorce, however, could be obtained for very petty causes. The position of woman among the Jews was high; and the relation of the wife to her husband, and of parents to their children, was on a level with that of Christians in later days. The home in Nazareth with Joseph and Mary at its head must have been in many ways an ideal one.

In Matt. 13:55-56 we read of Jesus' brothers, four in number, and of His sisters. What their exact relation to Him was, is a matter of dispute. The Protestant Church, with many exceptions, holds that they

were the children of both Joseph and Mary. Matt. 1: 25 and Luke 2: 7 naturally imply this; and it seems to have been the opinion of the early Church,—at least there is nothing to disprove it. The Greek Church says they were the children of Joseph by a former marriage. This is a very old view found in the *Protevangelium* of James, and it suits well the situation in John 7: 3-5. The Latin Church says they were the children of the sister of Mary or of Joseph. The Greek word for brothers and sisters might be used for cousins, i.e., blood relations. This was the view set forth by Jerome and St. Augustine. The question is largely one of sentiment; and a decision is biased by one's attitude towards celibacy and the worship of Mary. Its practical bearings are on the associations of the home at Nazareth, and also on the question whether the apostle James, the son of Alphaeus, is the same as James "the brother of the Lord," who was leader of the church in Jerusalem and probably author of the Epistle of James.

### 3. The Training of Jesus.

The boyhood of Jesus was a normal one with definite stages of growth. Luke emphasizes this (2: 40, 52); and he uses appropriate terms to mark different stages,—babe (2: 16), child (2: 21-40), the boy Jesus (2: 41-3), and Jesus (2: 52). He was not a monstrous and unnatural being, such as the Apocryphal Gospels portray. He was the ideal child and youth, advancing in "wisdom and stature [or age], and in favor with God and men"; and His training was that of a Jewish lad.

Josephus says of his nation, "Our chief ambition is to educate our children well"; and unquestionably

“in the true meaning of the word education, the Hebrew nation was at that time the most highly educated people in the world” (Ramsay). The education began in the home at the earliest possible period. Parents taught their little children the Shema and other passages of the Old Testament, and instructed them in the lessons of the home life. This was a duty expressly enjoined in Deut. 11: 19 and elsewhere.

The education of girls seems to have been confined to home instruction with what they gathered at synagogue services and the like; for the rabbis did not approve of advanced education for women. But for the boys in every village was a school, usually held in the synagogue and taught by the chazzan,—though there is some question as to this last point. The teacher was supported by the congregation, and was not allowed to take fees from his pupils, that there might be no favoritism to the rich.

At the age of six or seven a boy began to attend school, where he was taught to read and write, and given some elementary instruction in arithmetic and geography. The one textbook was the Hebrew Old Testament, concerning which Josephus says, “We have not (as the Gentiles) an innumerable number of books, disagreeing from and contradicting one another; but only twenty-two books which contain the records of all the past times” (Contra Apion 1:8). The boy began his study with Leviticus, passing thence to the other books of the law, then to the prophets, and finally to the remaining writings of the sacred collection. Aramaic had taken the place of Hebrew as the living language of the Jews, and must have been taught in the schools. Greek was used in Palestine as the international tongue; there was a Greek version of



the Old Testament (the Septuagint), and many of the popular apocalyptic books were in Greek. Though it would not be taught in the synagogue, there is reason to believe that Jesus, with His eager thirst for knowledge (Luke 2:46), learned to read and speak it. His quotations from the Old Testament are mostly according to the Septuagint,—though this may have been the form given them by the evangelists. He was familiar with the ideas expressed in the apocalyptic books, and Luke 11:49 seems to be a direct quotation from some one of them. In His conversation with Pilate, unless an interpreter was present, He probably used Greek. That He ever read any Gentile books is unlikely; but Gentile thought pervaded the atmosphere of Galilee, and He could not keep from breathing it in. Latin, also, had some currency in Palestine through the presence of the Romans: but we can hardly suppose that Jesus ever learned it. The inscription above the cross, however, was in Latin as well as in Greek and Aramaic.

Though a complete set of the parchment rolls of the Old Testament books would be far too expensive for a poor man like Joseph, yet some of them may, through inheritance or purchase, have been the chief treasure of his home. The books from which Jesus quotes most frequently in later years are Deuteronomy, Psalms and Isaiah; and His familiarity with them may justify the inference that they were the scriptures owned by the family; still, the fact that their teachings are most closely in harmony with His own thought would be sufficient explanation of His frequent reference to them. Unquestionably the whole of the Old Testament was familiar to Him; and we can hardly over-estimate the value and influence of its study.

#### 4. The Visit to the Temple.

The Apocryphal Gospels are full of grotesque or revolting stories of Jesus' boyhood. Luke's silence and also the high character of the one story he does tell (2:41-50) are strong proofs of the accuracy of his account. This story is of the greatest interest to us because it is the only glimpse of the mind of Jesus before His public ministry; and it throws some light upon the problem, To what extent did He realize in His years at Nazareth that He was the Son of God? or, to state it in another form, How fully developed was His Messianic consciousness?

At about the age of thirteen (i.e., at puberty), a boy became a son of the law; in other words, the responsibility for keeping the law was then transferred from his father to himself. Naturally, it was,—and among pious Jews still is,—a time of deep religious experience, dominated by a recognition of personal relationship and accountability to God. At this stage of His life Jesus went with His parents, probably for the first time, to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. The feast lasted seven days; but the first two were the most important, and many pilgrims left on the third day. And as it was only during feast-days that members of the Sanhedrin taught in the outer court of the temple, Mary and Joseph with their companions but without Jesus must have started homeward on the third day; for three days later,—a day out, a day back and a day of search,—they found Him in the midst of these teachers, both hearing them and asking them questions.

Their astonishment at finding Him there and thus occupied was natural; no other boy of twelve would

have preferred the society of these grave rabbis to all the novel sights and excitements of the great city. His choice reveals a deep thirst for instruction in the Scriptures,—for answers to questions too hard for the synagogue teachers at Nazareth but professedly within the power of these great doctors at Jerusalem. Did He now have His first revealing experience of the barrenness of the rabbinical teachings? And on the other hand there is a note of surprise in His own reply to His parents, “How is it that ye sought me? Knew ye not that I must be in my Father’s house?” With childlike simplicity He had taken for granted that they would not think of looking for Him in any other place, because they would agree with Him that it was His duty to tarry there until they gave the signal to begin the homeward journey. It shows confident expectation that they would sympathize with His deepest religious aspirations; and thus it throws light on the close companionship of the Nazareth family.

That the rabbis should pay attention to the boy is not surprising. They liked to get the impression made upon a bright child’s mind by problems of the law. Josephus says, “When I was a child and about fourteen years of age, I was commended to all by the love I had for learning; on which account the highpriests and principal men of the city came then frequently to me together, in order to know my opinion about the accurate understanding of points of the Law,” (Life, 2). The amazement of those who listened to Jesus was aroused, not by His display of supernatural wisdom (such as the Apocryphal Gospels attribute to the child), but by His quick intelligence, His originality and independence, and the profound spiritual life revealed in His questions and answers. The soul of the

boy was stirred to its depths by His new responsibility as son of the law, by this first visit to the city of David and the magnificent temple, by all the incidents of the feast, and by intercourse with the revered teachers of Israel. That which had been latent at Nazareth was now brought to light.

In the first recorded words of Jesus, the most significant thing is His use of "my Father" as the name for God. What did the boy mean by it? To suppose that He had in mind the unique relationship set forth in the doctrine of the Trinity, is contrary to the conclusion that His boyhood was the ideal human boyhood. While we may fully believe in His divinity, such clear consciousness of it in childhood would make impossible His normal development from infancy to manhood. In later days Jesus taught His disciples to use "Father" as the name which best expresses God's relationship and loving attitude to man. This fatherhood of God is sometimes claimed to be a special Christian doctrine; but it is found in the Old Testament, though only a few in the days of Jesus seem to have discovered it. He certainly would be one of those few; and we may suppose that when now He spoke of "my Father," He meant exactly what He wishes us to mean when He tells us to say "our Father." Such a meaning has become so familiar to us that we expect even a child to grasp it; but in the time of Jesus, the wisest rabbis at Jerusalem taught that God dwells far apart from man, that He is to be feared rather than loved, and that His most significant name is one too holy to be uttered. We can well understand why they were filled with amazement at the little lad who sat in their circles, and in the simplest, sincerest way spoke of God as His Father. Did they realize how those words con-

tradicted all their cherished ideas about the transcendent deity, and also how they revealed the most intimate divine life in Him who used them thus naturally?

### 5. The Years of Obscure Toil.

For most boys, school life ended when they were twelve or fourteen. Only a favored few passed from the synagogue schools to the higher schools taught by the rabbis, mainly in Jerusalem. These higher schools were designed for future teachers of the law. Paul attended one (Acts 22: 3); but Jesus never did. John 7: 15, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" indicates the surprise of His hearers that Jesus, without having been trained in a school of the rabbis, could assume the position of a teacher.

It would seem that Joseph died in the early manhood of Jesus, since we hear nothing more about him, and the tradition is that he was much older than Mary. If so, the burden of the support of the mother and also of the younger children,—if we accept the usual Protestant view of His "brothers and sisters,"—must have fallen largely upon Jesus, forcing Him to fill His days with constant labor as "the carpenter." There is every reason to believe that He prospered in His trade, reaping the fruits which come to ability, industry and integrity; and possibly His brothers and other workmen may have been in His employ. "The skill with which He trained and sent forth His disciples indicates that He was accustomed to directing men; and several of the parables, e.g., that of the talents, or of the equally paid laborers, or of the two sons who were asked to work for their father, represent the point of view of the employer rather than that of the em-



ployed" (Kent). Nazareth was a small place; but Capernaum, which was only twenty miles away, offered more opportunities for artisans; and there are indications that at the time of the public ministry the brothers of Jesus were no longer living in Nazareth, and that Capernaum was a second home of the family (Mark 6: 3, 2: 1; Matt. 4: 13). Some business venture may have caused the brothers to remove to Capernaum; and if so, they would do it with the counsel and co-operation of Jesus.

One thing is certain,—Jesus, living in Galilee, was in the broad current of the world's thought and action, and could not escape intimate acquaintance with it. Those who picture Him as a gentle dreamer, shut away from all knowledge of the stress and struggle of business and politics, unable to appreciate the temptations or the opportunities of active life, deliberately ignore His actual environment. Galilee was one of the centers of the Roman world, the crossing-place of many famous highways, "along which caravans passed, and legions marched, and princes swept with their retinues, and all sorts of travellers from all countries went to and fro." It was a land filled with cities, and teeming with people. It bordered upon lands, like Phoenicia and the Decapolis, that were famous for trade and rich in Greek civilization; and it was permeated with their influence. As George Adam Smith points out, "all the rumor of the empire entered Palestine close to Nazareth—the news from Rome, about the emperor's health, about the changing influence of the great statesmen, about the prospects at court of Herod or of the Jews, about Caesar's last order concerning the tribute, or whether the policy of the procurator would be sustained. Many Galilean

families must have had relatives in Rome; Jews would come back to this countryside to tell of the life of the world's capital. Moreover, the scandals of the Herods buzzed up and down these roads; pedlars carried them, and the peripatetic rabbis would moralize upon them. The customs, too, of the neighboring Gentiles,—their loose living, their sensuous worship, their absorption in business, the hopelessness of the inscriptions on their tombs, multitudes of which were readable (as some are still) on the roads round Galilee,—all this would furnish endless talk in Nazareth, both among men and boys." Jesus in such an environment was in constant contact with the great world and its problems; and whatever we may say concerning the attitude He took toward the affairs of life, we certainly cannot say that He took it because of ignorance.

One of the most remarkable and significant facts in the life of Jesus is His sinlessness. The challenge put by Him to the rulers of Jerusalem, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" (John 8:46), has been taken up by certain men of recent times, and they have tried to find in the words and deeds of His public ministry some flaw or lapse or least defect that would stain the perfect purity of His character; but the verdict of the world is that this search has been in vain, and that Jesus remains, indeed, "the Crystal Christ." Though we have no record of His years in Nazareth, we are confident that the same sinlessness was displayed in them; for, in His self-revelation to His disciples and the world, there is no slightest mark of penitence for an imperfect past, and no trace of the strain and anguish by which men "rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things." The standard of obedience to the Father which He set for

us is so high that it arouses in the best of men a sense of failure and self-condemnation; yet He said, with evident sincerity and knowledge, "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8:29). Such perfect obedience is for Him no acquired habit but the very instinct of His being, manifesting itself in every portion of His life from the very first.

In the Apocryphal Gospels and in the later writings attempts have been made to picture the life of Jesus in His home-town; but it is a task beyond the highest imagination, and we turn with relief from such imperfect imaginings to the simple statement of Luke, "The grace of God was upon him" (2:40). That His life was one in favor with men as well as with God (Luke 2:52), we can readily believe. The slowness of His brothers in later years to accept Him as Messiah is no proof that His earlier days had not won their admiration and love; it only shows that the Jewish idea of what the Messiah would be and do had been impressed upon them until they could not easily set it aside. The later life of James, the brother of Jesus, and the Epistle of James, if that is by him, throw an interesting light upon the training received in the home at Nazareth. We would conclude that it was strongly Jewish and somewhat austere; and in it we seem to see the influence of Mary more than of her Son.

We are told by Luke that when Jesus visited Nazareth during His public ministry, "he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read" (4:16). What is meant by the statement, "as his custom was"? Certainly not merely attendance at the synagogue service; this would not be worth mentioning, since it was the custom of

every devout Jew to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath. It may refer to His practice of preaching in the synagogue during this particular period of His ministry (compare 4:15); or it may mean that in earlier days at Nazareth He was accustomed to read the lesson and preach. In the latter case we have a glimpse of the respect given Him by His townsfolk. The ruler of the synagogue often invited the young carpenter to be the reader and speaker in the service. We can well understand why he did so.

The possible development of the Messianic consciousness during this period of obscure toil in Nazareth is best discussed in connection with the baptism of Jesus by John.

## V

### JOHN THE BAPTIST

**T**HE Gospels give a graphic and fairly complete account of John the Baptist. Had he lived in Old Testament times he would stand out more distinctly, and we might see clearly why it was that Jesus said of him, "Among them that are born of women there is none greater than John" (Luke 7:28). But he remains to most minds a dim and unimportant figure because the proximity and glory of Jesus have caused him to fade out of sight like the day-star beside the rising sun.

#### I. His Birth and Training.

Luke tells the story of his birth as an introduction to the birth of Jesus. Briefly it is as follows:—Zacharias is a priest of the course of Abijah who, with his wife Elisabeth, herself of priestly descent, lives in a city of the hill country of Judea. Their life in all things is righteous and blameless, but is overshadowed by one supreme sorrow, they have no child, and old age has ended their hope of one. In the regular order of his course, Zacharias goes up to Jerusalem to perform his priestly duties; and while there it is his lot one morning to enter the holy place and burn incense upon the altar at the hour of prayer. This is the highest office a common priest can perform, and is given to him but once in the course of his ministry. We can under-



stand, therefore, why Zacharias is filled with deep emotion as he stands by the altar; and why, as the smoke of the incense ascends, typifying the prayers of the people, there arises from his own heart the most sacred petition of a devout Israelite,—that Jehovah may remember His people by speedily sending the Messiah. In a vision the angel Gabriel appears to him, and assures him that his prayer is heard, and also that he is to have a son, whom he must name John, who shall be the promised forerunner of the Messiah. As a sign that the vision is not an illusion, and that the promise shall be fulfilled, he is stricken deaf and dumb. He remains in Jerusalem until the end of his week, although unable to take part in the temple services because of his physical infirmity, and then returns home where the words of the angel find their fulfilment in the pregnancy of his wife. About six months later Mary, by divine direction, comes to visit Elisabeth, who is her kinswoman, and remains with her until after the birth of the child. When the child is to be circumcised and given a name, the friends propose that he be called Zacharias after his father; but the mother insists that the name be John, and the dumb father writes out the same name upon a tablet. Immediately his lips are unsealed, and with thanksgiving to God he proclaims his remarkable experience. And all those that hear the story say in fear and astonishment, “What then shall this child be?”

Luke's account, like his account of the birth of Jesus, must in some way have been derived from Mary, who through her abode with Elisabeth would be familiar with all these details. This explains its minuteness up to and including the circumcision and naming of the child, and its silence concerning later events.

The account, like that of Jesus' birth, bears on its face the marks of being primitive. For example, the various hymns express Jewish Messianic ideas in the form in which they were held by the most devout and spiritually minded of that time. It would have been difficult to compose them in later days when Messianic ideas had been largely transformed by Christian thought. The problems, therefore, of the trustworthiness of this story are practically the same as those of the story of the birth of Jesus, and need not be considered a second time.

All that we know concerning the boyhood of John is given in a single verse, "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts until the day of his shewing unto Israel" (Luke 1:80). His aged parents doubtless died when he was young, and his early manhood was spent in the country regions of Judea. We need not think of him as a hermit, or as withdrawing from all current religious life and thought, but simply as a man of the country, like the prophet Amos who once lived in the same region and whose message against popular sins was in spirit like that of John. We are told (Mark 1:6) that, when he came forward to begin his work of baptizing, he was clothed with camel's hair and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and his food was locusts and wild honey. This is simply the dress and the food of a countryman, and is repeated by the Bedouins of the wilderness today. The other great prophet from the desert, Elijah, whose work in many ways was reproduced by John, was clothed in similar fashion (II Kings 1:8), and doubtless lived upon similar food.

In the prediction of John's birth the angel said, "He shall drink no wine nor strong drink" (Luke

1:15), which means that he was to be under the Nazarite's vow. This vow, which might be taken for a definite period or, as in John's case, for life, involved three restrictions,—abstinence from intoxicants, wearing the hair uncut, and avoidance of contact with any corpse (Num. 6: 1-8). Of course, these were but the outward signs of an inward dedication to God's service, and in the present instance showed that even before his birth John was set apart to be "the prophet of the Most High."

Was John taught by the Essenes? There is no proof of this though some, who claim that the ideas of Jesus were gained from the Essenes through John, would have us think so. It is true that there were settlements of Essenes down by the Dead Sea in this same wilderness of Judea. But there is nothing to connect John with them. "The rule of his life was isolation; the principle of theirs was community" (Lightfoot). John in his preaching emphasized spiritual uncleanness, while their idea of sin was largely ceremonial impurity. And there is no hint that the Essenes were expecting a Messiah, or were preparing themselves for his reception. If John had any teacher during these years in the wilderness it was the Book of Isaiah. This is evident from the fact that most of his ideas concerning what the Messiah is to be and do, and also concerning his own mission as the forerunner of the Messiah, are taken from Isaiah. And also we notice that later on, when John is in doubt whether Jesus is actually the Messiah or not, Jesus refers him to the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah as now being fulfilled (Matt. 11: 2-8).

## 2. His Mission.

We do not know just when John began his work. Luke dates it carefully (3: 1-2); but none of the dates is exact excepting the fifteenth year of Tiberius, in reckoning which we probably should include his joint reign with Augustus; as this began about 12 A.D. the date would be 26 A.D. which coincides with the beginning of the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate. The season, we may suppose, was autumn; for then the multitudes could best come forth to listen to John. The place was the lower valley of the Jordan, which was included in the wilderness of Judea,—a region full of associations with Elisha and Elijah. Here could be found plenty of water for the baptism, and also solitude such as John craved in the intervals of his work. Bethany (John 1:28), and Aenon (John 3:23), where he was later, have been variously identified; evidently he changed his location from time to time, and was not always on the same side of the Jordan, nor, indeed, always at the Jordan.

John's task, as he gathered it from a study of the prophets and from his knowledge of present conditions, was threefold:—

1). To proclaim the nearness of the kingdom of God and the coming of the Messiah in judgment. His idea of the kingdom differed from the popular one chiefly in emphasis. What he emphasized in it was not the sensuous and political but the spiritual,—the true theocracy, the high moral law, the preparation of heart. And because current life was lacking in the spiritual, he also emphasized the purifying, judging work of the Messiah. The still higher Christian idea of the kingdom and the Messiah he did not have. Until

his death he stood outside,—a herald but not a member of the kingdom.

2). To make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Both John and the Pharisees agreed that when the people were prepared, the Messiah would come. It was a saying of the rabbis, "If Israel repent but for a single day, the Messiah will come at once." But while the Pharisees laid stress on ceremonial fitness, John demanded only moral fitness; hence his cry, "Repent, make ready." He enjoined no change of outward forms, but a change of heart and life. And he did not try to build up a sect of followers, though such a sect did arise and survived his death; what he labored to bring about was individual and national regeneration.

3). To point out the Messiah when finally he should appear. This part of his mission seems to have dawned upon him after he had begun his work; and with it came the conviction that by some visible sign he would recognize the person who was God's Anointed (John 1:33).

What were the results? As to 1) he was highly successful. Though the Pharisees refused to believe it, the people generally held John to be a prophet; and a prophet had long been lacking. His preaching was with power both because of its message and of its manner. The nation was stirred by his proclamation; multitudes thronged to hear him; and even publicans and Roman soldiers asked, "Teacher, what must we do?" The enigmatical statement of Jesus,—"*From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and men of violence take it by force*" (Matt. 11:12; cf. Luke 16:16), may be condemnatory of the unhealthy excitement aroused by John, or else commendatory of the eagerness for Mes-



sianic blessings shown by his disciples. As to 2) John failed. He could awaken no sense of sin in the leaders of the people. They admitted that the common herd might need repentance and purification, but denied the need for themselves. Having Abraham as their father, they felt that the coming of the Messiah would be for them a blessing, and that only Gentiles need dread it (Matt. 3:7-9). And in explanation of the fierceness with which John denounced their professedly pious lives, they said, "He has a demon" (Matt. 11:18). Among the common people the work of John, though great, was superficial and transient; they rejoiced in his light "for a season" (John 5:45). As to 3) he did point out Jesus; but the announcement, as we shall see, impressed only a few.

### 3. His Baptism.

From what source did John get the idea of a baptism? Certainly not from the Essenes or the Pharisees; for their baptisms were often repeated, and were purely ceremonial. The protest of the delegation sent from the Pharisees, "Why baptizeth thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah nor the prophet?" (John 1:25), shows that they recognized this baptism to be a special one which only a great servant of God could perform,—something entirely distinct from the ordinary purifications. Also John's own title, the baptizer, shows that his work was unique. Possibly he gained the idea from the baptism (immersion) of the children of Israel just before God entered into a special covenant relation with them (Ex. 19:10), or from the baptism (sprinkling) when this covenant was adopted by them (Ex. 24:8). (The former reference speaks only of washing garments but the rabbis agreed

that immersion of the body was included.) If so, his purpose was to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah by emphasizing anew their covenant relation with God. More probably it was the baptism (immersion) of proselytes when received into the Jewish faith that gave him the idea. He would create a people for the Messiah by treating all his countrymen as if, at present, they were heathen, who must be baptized as proselytes before they could be admitted to the fold of the true Israel.

What, then, did the baptism of John signify? It caused much discussion (Mark 11:30). Mark and Luke call it "the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins"; and Mark and Matthew state that the people confessed their sins at baptism. It certainly was an outward expression of repentance and turning from sin; nevertheless, this could not have been its innermost idea, else Jesus would not have sought it. John's work was "to make ready for the Lord a people prepared" (Luke 1:17); and repentance with forgiveness of sins would be necessary in such preparation. The outward washing with water would symbolize the inward purifying; but if the applicant were already purified, still the baptism would be full of significance as the public act by which he was enrolled among those who were willing and prepared to accept the Messiah and belong to his kingdom.

While John distinguishes his baptism with "water" from that of the Messiah with "the holy spirit and with fire," we must not read into his words the Christian idea of the Trinity and baptism. He was preaching to his own nation; and for them the holy spirit was a reverent name for "God active in the human life." Such activity had caused Israel's glory in the past;

and, though for the present it had ceased, the prophetic promise was that it would revive with the Messianic age and cause its blessings. The announcement, therefore, that the one coming after him would baptize with the holy spirit, "was the affirmation in another form that the Messianic age was at hand" (Wood). At the same time the literal meaning of the word "spirit" was used by John in a figure setting forth his conception of the work of the Messiah. The figure is that of the threshing floor (Luke 3:16-17). The holy spirit is the divine wind, the breath of Jehovah,—an instrument of judgment according to John's favorite book (Is. 41:16, 24; 11:4),—by which the chaff is winnowed from the grain, when the fire is to burn it up. John considered his work of purifying the nation to be only a preliminary of the far more searching work by the Messiah, who acting as Jehovah's representative and with powers supplied by Him would thoroughly cleanse Israel from its iniquities (cf. Matt. 13:41-43).

Concerning the form of John's baptism the statement that John and Jesus went down into the Jordan eliminates aspersion (sprinkling) but still leaves the question open between immersion (dipping) and affusion (pouring). His baptism was not Christian baptism, for Paul rebaptized some who had received it (Acts 19:1-5); evidently it could not be, for its significance was different. So the form is of interest simply as bearing upon the probable early form of Christian baptism; since it seems likely that the apostles, most of whom had been trained in John's baptism, would adopt the same form when they undertook the work of Christian baptism after the death of Jesus.

#### 4. Jesus' Estimate of John.

John claimed nothing for himself. He was simply the voice that called attention to the coming of the Messiah,—“*Vox præterea nihil*” (John 1:19-21). No temptation to assume a higher position had power over him (Luke 3:15-17). No attempt to make him jealous of Jesus' greater success and popularity was successful (John 3:26-30).

The estimate of John expressed by Jesus was far different. He was not a reed swayed by popular opinion, nor a man who sought his own selfish advantage; he was a prophet and much more,—the special forerunner of the Messiah. In the old dispensation he was the greatest of all, but less than the lesser in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 11:7-11). He initiated the great and violent movement into the kingdom; and those who have spiritual discernment may see that he was the expected Elijah (12-14). His way, like that of his predecessors, was “the way of righteousness,”—the way of legality, and so not the way of Jesus (Matt. 21:32). In spirit and in action he was unlike Jesus, though just as unacceptable to his generation (Luke 7:31 f.). Yet there must have been some resemblance between the two, for not only Herod but others thought that Jesus was John *redivivus* (Matt. 14:2, 16:14).

## VI

### THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

**W**HEN distress is deepest and need is sorest, God will send the Messiah to deliver His people,—this was the current belief, accepted by John the Baptist. But in popular thought the distress and need were political, and the Messianic deliverance was from the yoke of heathen oppressors; while in John's mind the wretchedness was spiritual, caused by sin, and the deliverance, which only one far greater than himself could bring about, was a thorough purification of each individual life. His certainty that the advent of the Messiah was close at hand arose, therefore, from his conviction that now the sins of the nation were so great that this direct intervention of Jehovah by His Anointed was absolutely necessary. And with sublime confidence he proclaimed "The Kingdom of God is at hand," and awaited, from he knew not what quarter, the appearing of the King.

#### 1. The Time and the Place.

How long John had been preaching and baptizing before Jesus came to him, we are not told. The news that a prophet had appeared proclaiming the near advent of the Messiah would spread rapidly, and would soon be carried to Galilee; since one of the great highways from Jerusalem to the North ran near the Jordan. People from the lake of Galilee joined the ranks of



John's disciples, e.g., Andrew, Peter and Philip from Bethsaida (John 1:44); and before long the stir of John's message must have reached even the quiet village of Nazareth. That Jesus was with John some brief time before He was baptized is probable, and is confirmed by the statement of John 3:26, "He that was with thee beyond the Jordan." He would wish to study John's work, and learn its real nature before endorsing it; and His later references to John do show an intimate knowledge of the man and his message. But there is nothing to prove that Jesus was in any true sense a disciple of John, or that He gained His message from him. Renan, who reconstructs the life of Jesus according to his own fancy, imagines that Jesus had already gathered a few disciples and begun preaching a simple gospel of the kingdom, when He heard of John's work; and that with His disciples He went to John, was mastered by his strong influence, adopted baptism as a part of His own mission, and became a laborer with John at the sacrifice of His earlier, purer gospel. There is no evidence for this; and David Smith properly pronounces it "the wildest of vagaries, destitute alike of reason and of evidence."

If we must attempt to fix the exact time of the baptism, we may say that as John was five or six months older than Jesus, he may have entered on his work that much earlier; so, if John began in the autumn of 26 A.D., Jesus was baptized in January or February of 27 A.D. The place now pointed out as the scene of the baptism is a ford of the Jordan nearly east of Jericho. Like other traditional sites in the Holy Land, it was selected in later days mainly for the convenience of pilgrims, and without regard to historical accuracy. This special ford could most easily be reached from

Jerusalem, and would satisfy the desire of those who wished both to see where the children of Israel crossed the Jordan, and to bathe where Jesus was baptized. We know that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan (Mark 1:9), probably in the lower part of the stream; but the exact place cannot be known.

## 2. The Motive of Jesus.

A passage quoted from the Gospel of the Hebrews,—apparently the most valuable of the lost gospels,—runs thus, “Behold, the Lord’s mother and brothers said to him, John the Baptist is baptizing for remission of sins; let us go and be baptized by him. But he said to them, What sin have I done that I should go and be baptized by him, unless, perhaps, what I have now said is ignorance?” Unfortunately the reply to Jesus’ question is not preserved, so we cannot know how the writer solved the problem it presents. If John’s baptism meant simply purification from sin, there was no reason why Jesus should undergo it. We have, however, already seen that the central purpose of John’s work was to make ready a people prepared for the Messiah and his kingdom; and the baptism was an outward expression of that preparation. Repentance with consequent forgiveness of sins was the preliminary qualification, but was not necessary in the case of Jesus. By His sinlessness and His readiness to fulfill all righteousness, He was prepared already; and He could claim a place among the new Israel. His only question concerning John’s work would be, Is it of God?; when by observation He was able to answer this affirmatively, He would be eager to share in it by presenting Himself for baptism.

While Jesus and John were distant kinsmen, it is

not likely they knew anything about each other. The birth of Jesus with all its wonders and promise was a sacred mystery to Mary (Luke 2:19, 51) who probably did not reveal it to her child; and doubtless the same reserve surrounded John's birth. Moreover, the death of John's parents, and his later life in the country, made communication between the two families unlikely. Though the statement of John, "I knew him not" (John 1:33), cannot be taken to mean more than that John before the baptism was ignorant of the Messianic mission of Jesus, yet his other statement, "I have need to be baptized of thee" (Matt. 3:14), does not imply an earlier acquaintance, but may express simply the impression that Jesus made upon John at the time when He came asking for baptism. The hour was at the close of some day's work, when the multitude had departed (Luke 3:21) and there was opportunity for intimate conversation. John would demand of any applicant for baptism that he confess and forsake his sins. The answer of Jesus that He had nothing to confess or forsake would surprise John, and seem to indicate that Jesus was lacking in spiritual sensitiveness. But when further questioning and conversation showed that here, indeed, was one whose life was in perfect harmony with God's will, and whose conscience, though most quick, gave only constant approval, then John would be ready to confess with humility, "I have need to be baptized of thee."

### 3. The Vision and the Voice.

The baptism was an hour of deepest spiritual experience for both John and Jesus. On the one hand, the Baptist felt that here was a uniquely spiritual person, concerning whom he could not help asking, "May not

this be the expected Messiah?" On the other hand, Jesus was passing through one of the crises of His life,—a fact which Luke indicates by his statement that Jesus, having been baptized, was praying (Luke 3: 21); for Luke mentions the prayers of Jesus only in connection with such crises. It was at this hour that, according to the most ancient account, "he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him; and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased" (Mark 1: 10-11). Were the vision and the voice objective, i.e., would an unsympathetic bystander have seen and heard anything or not? The question is not important because, whatever the objective facts may have been, it was the subjective that were influential—not what reached the eye and ear of Jesus and John, but what made an impress upon their souls. And if we reject the objective reality, we do not thereby deny all reality, nor make the event less truly divine. The argument that the experience was subjective seems the stronger, e.g., in Matthew the voice is addressed to John, in Mark and Luke it is addressed to Jesus; also, Matthew says "the heavens were opened unto him," as if it were to him alone,—indeed, some old manuscripts omit the words "unto him," because apparently the copyist felt that they make the scene subjective. The vision of Stephen (Acts 7: 56) was certainly wholly subjective; the voice in John 12: 28 has at least a strong subjective element,—the different hearers being able to grasp the message according to their state of receptivity; and the vision and voice at the baptism would seem to be of the same character.

#### 4. The Revelation of the Messiahship.

In the might of strong conviction John had been proclaiming that the Messiah was at hand; but where and who he was John did not know. The study of his favorite prophet had taught him that the Messiah would be anointed with the Spirit of God (Is. 11:2, 42:1, 61:1); and he was looking for a person who was evidently thus anointed (John 1:33). The vision and the voice were the revelation to him that Jesus was the Messiah. The divine anointing was evidenced by the Spirit descending like a dove; and the words, "This is my beloved Son," which were like an echo of Ps. 2:7, made the meaning of the act clear. Henceforth John's message was changed from the general announcement that the Messiah was coming, to the still more thrilling proclamation, "In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not,—he that cometh after me" (John 1:26 f.).

Did this same experience reveal for the first time to Jesus that He was the Messiah, or did it simply confirm what He already knew? This is a difficult question to which there are three possible answers:—

1). Jesus knew *all* about His mission as Messiah before He came to John.

If so, when did He begin to know it? If the divine knowledge was always His,—even when a babe in the cradle,—then in no real sense was He a man, entering into human experiences; an omniscient child is not a human child. Moreover, we are expressly told that in His childhood "Jesus advanced in wisdom" (Luke 2:52). Nor can we meet this difficulty by saying that Jesus as human knew no more than other human babes or children, but as divine knew all things. That would



make Him two entirely distinct beings, thus destroying the unity of His nature. But if when a babe He had no Messianic consciousness, at what date in His life previous to the baptism did that consciousness arise? The baptism was certainly the most suitable event for awakening it; and, as we shall see, the temptation immediately after the baptism is best explained, if we suppose that now for the first time His Messianic mission was set plainly before Him.

2). Jesus knew *nothing* about His mission as Messiah until the baptism.

Wendt holds that the call of Jesus was as unexpected as that of Paul,—the only difference being that Paul's previous life had been in an opposite direction so that the call forced him to break entirely with the past, while for Jesus the call revealed a goal towards which unconsciously He was already moving. Such ignorance is not inconsistent with the divinity of Jesus, if we suppose that when the Son of God entered into human life He voluntarily laid aside divine knowledge,—as He also laid aside divine power,—in order that He might be fully one with us. But even with no supernatural knowledge, it seems probable that Jesus may have had, while still in Nazareth, at least a glimpse of His future Messiahship. As a devout Jew He would share in the popular longing for the coming of the Messianic kingdom; though His conception of that kingdom would be far more spiritual than the popular one. The Messiah of His thought would be, not necessarily a superhuman being and certainly not an ambitious earthly king, but rather the suffering servant of Jehovah, portrayed by Isaiah, whose mission was to lead the people with the aid of the divine spirit into all righteousness. As Jesus in the quiet of Naza-

reth pondered over these things and yearned for the salvation of Israel, the thought may well have come to Him, "What if even I should be the one whom the Father has chosen for this high yet sorrowful task? Would I be ready to undertake it; and how could I know that He had called me?" The news that John was preaching the nearness of the Messiah would center His thought still more strongly upon this question, and would impel Him to seek out John and listen to his message. And some hint of this readiness for whatever mission God might reveal to Him may perhaps lie in the "Suffer it [or me] now" (Matt. 3:15) with which He met John's unwillingness to baptize Him. Indeed, as Loisy says, "the revelation of the baptism could have been addressed only to a spirit ready to receive it."

3). Jesus first *clearly* learned of His mission as the Messiah at the baptism.

This follows, if we reject both the foregoing answers. Certain old manuscripts give in Luke 3:22, that which Harnack thinks to be the original form of the words from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son; this day have I begotten thee.' If this form is accepted, we are not obliged,—*contra* Harnack,—to conclude that the divine birth must be rejected; but we may infer that the baptism was the hour when the Messianic consciousness of Jesus was quickened into activity. The voice from heaven was the first positive and unmistakable announcement of His Messiahship; yet previous years had not been without increasingly clear suggestions of it. His sinlessness, His eager desire to do the divine will as He grew to know that will, His unbroken communion with a God who to Him was a Father, developed a unique filial consciousness which

made Him ever more prepared for the awakening of the Messianic consciousness. Luke's narrative seems to recognize three stages in the spiritual history of Jesus, viz. : that which began with His birth, and continued through the years of His childhood at Nazareth,—His life as the son of Mary; next, that which began with the temple visit, and continued through the years of manhood at Nazareth,—His life as a son of the Father; and finally, that which began with the baptism, and continued through His public ministry,—His life as the Messianic Son of God. The advance from one to another was not by a total transformation, but rather by the addition of new spiritual powers to those already possessed. And underneath all changes that the years of human growth produced was the changeless submission of His own will to the will of God. Because at every stage in His life He could sincerely say, "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8:29), the Father's voice could proclaim, "In thee I am well pleased."

## VII

### THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

THE story of the temptation in the wilderness must be accepted as undoubtedly historical; for its origin cannot otherwise be explained. "His disciples would not have been likely to think that He could be tempted to evil; and, if they had supposed that He could, they would have imagined quite different temptations for Him, as various legends of the saints show" (Plummer). Moreover, as Sanday points out, "no one possessed that degree of insight into the nature of our Lord's mission and ministry that could have enabled him to invent it." But the story has seldom received sufficient attention from students of the life of Jesus. Some have affirmed that it transcends human comprehension, and that "on the deep secrets of those forty days it is not meet that speculation should dwell" (Ellicott). Others have made it little more than the experience of an ordinary man who, believing he had power to work miracles, struggled against a selfish inclination to use that power for his personal ease and glory. Many have spent more time in discussing the outward form of the three temptations than in seeking their inward meaning. And few have emphasized the significance of the fact that Jesus told His disciples,—and apparently more than once, since the order of the temptations varies in the two accounts preserved,—the full story of His experience. It is the only one of

His solitary experiences that, so far as we know, He ever revealed; and undoubtedly His reason for revealing it was that the disciples might better understand the way in which His mission must be performed. Garvie suggests that He told it after the time when He had to say to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Mark 8:33). It would, indeed, be helpful then, but equally so on more than one other occasion when the disciples marvelled that He refused to fulfill the popular Messianic expectations.

### 1. The Form of the Story.

When we realize that the story was told by Jesus Himself, and is His revelation of a spiritual experience, we shall not fall into the mistake of those who treat it exactly the same as the records of what the apostles themselves saw and heard. The symbolical form in which Jesus so often set forth the facts of the inner life is the form He adopts in this narrative. Its statements concerning Satan fall into line with His rebuke to Peter, or His declarations, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18), and "Behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:31). Its other graphic details are like similar symbolic pictures of spiritual experiences, e.g., "I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions" (Luke 10:19), "I came to cast fire upon the earth" (Luke 12:49), and "If thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out" (Mark 9:47). To discuss the possible form assumed by Satan, or to search for some mountain from which "all the kingdoms of the world" might be seen, is worse than a waste of time; it cheapens the story, and makes it strange and repulsive. We may be willing to



admit the existence of Satan and his power to present temptations; but certainly a person like Jesus was not tempted in such a childish way.

The scene of the temptation was doubtless the same wilderness of Judea in which the baptism took place, and was a convenient region for one who sought solitude after it. The length of time may have been forty days; though that period is so often used as a conventional statement of the duration of some serious or sacred experience, that the use of it in the same way here is not unlikely. The fast was not deliberate,—Jesus placed little value on fasting; it was caused partly by lack of food, but far more by mental and spiritual preoccupation which banished all thought of food. And though His final hunger suggested the form in which the first temptation was put, it was not the source of that temptation.

## 2. The Possibility of Temptation.

It is sometimes argued that if the story of the temptation is true, the sinlessness of Jesus could not have been perfect, since temptation gets its power from evil desires in the heart of the one tempted, and a sinless being would feel no inclination to sin. This must be admitted concerning one class of temptations. When the choice is presented between a thing that is good and a thing that in itself is evil, e.g., between using another's money faithfully and embezzling it, there can be no temptation unless a sinful desire is allowed to sway the heart. But there is another class of temptations in which the choice presented is between two things of which both are blameless and even excellent, but one is better and more difficult, e.g., the choice sometimes between a life of home duties and a life of

foreign mission work. In itself the easier and more attractive thing is not evil, and to desire it is not wrong: yet yielding to the desire is sinful, for it is turning from a greater good to a lesser. The rule that should govern all choices is simple: "Every action is right which in the presence of a lower principle follows a higher; every action is wrong which in the presence of a higher principle follows a lower" (Martineau). But the choice between two good things is often far more difficult than the choice between a good thing and an evil thing; and it may present to a noble nature temptations inconceivable by a base nature. The temptations of Jesus, as we shall see, were of this character; and their strength came from His eager desire to fulfill His Messianic mission by bringing all Israel into the kingdom of God.

### 3. The Three Temptations.

The temptations of Jesus are often explained as a threefold assault upon the three parts of His human nature—His body, soul and spirit—by the triple agency of evil—the flesh, the world and the devil; the appeal being made successively to the innocent human desires to live, to be recognized, and to accomplish. But such an explanation does not give sufficient emphasis to the significant, "If thou art the Son of God," with which two of Satan's proposals begin. This is not a suggestion that doubt exists in Jesus' mind; for doubt, after God's explicit declaration, "Thou art my beloved Son," would itself be sin; rather it is an open recognition of the Messiahship as the starting point of Satan's assault. This "if," Godet says, has almost the force of since. Christ is to be tempted, not as the son of Mary, but as the Son of God,—the Messiah. What-

ever may be our opinion as to Jesus' knowledge of His Messianic mission before the baptism, we must agree that the baptism, with the voice from heaven and the descent of the Holy Spirit, brought that mission to His mind with overwhelming force. He was to be the founder and ruler of the kingdom of God, the Saviour of mankind. The work this involved, vast as it was, He was ready to undertake unhesitatingly; for His obedience to the Father's will was perfect. But how should it be performed? How should He draw all men to Him, and win them as subjects of a spiritual kingdom? This was the question which must be answered before He could enter upon the work; and for whose answer He sought solitude and opportunity for deepest meditation. It was the problem filling His mind to the exclusion of all else as He wandered alone in the wilderness.

There were several possible ways which presented themselves, all based upon popular expectations of what the Messiah would do when he came. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." The Jews were awaiting a Messiah who would do miracles of that kind. His kingdom, so they expected, would be an earthly paradise. The rabbis delighted to set forth the joys of the Messianic days, telling with Oriental hyperbole how a kernel of wheat would be as large as the kidney of an ox, the trees would bear fruit all the year round, a single grape would load a wagon, and wine could be drawn from it as from a cask. Men were hungering and thirsting for a Messiah who would work such miracles; and such miracles were within the power of Jesus, and in themselves were perfectly right. As the Lord of nature He could command it to feed His followers;

and He could banish hunger, disease and death from His realm. All men would flock into such a kingdom; and His mission would be speedily and easily accomplished. But what of the character of the kingdom? What of subjects who serve for loaves and fishes? The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Would turning stones into bread create this? Would it not rather have just the opposite effect, and make men more sensuous and carnal than ever? There could be but one answer to such a question. The temptation was recognized and put aside. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

If men are not to be drawn into the kingdom by their appetites, may they not be allured into it by their imaginations? Let the Messiah descend, borne on the wings of angels, into the courts of the temple where priests and rulers daily assemble to pray for his coming; and immediately the Sanhedrin will accept him, and the whole Jewish nation will follow their lead. This is perfectly proper; for in what way should he use his divine power to work miracles, if not in proving to men that he is the Son of God? They expect this, and will demand it. Why not meet their demand, and thus establish the kingdom promptly and firmly? But, again, what of the nature of such a kingdom? Will there be anything spiritual about it? Righteousness, peace and joy,—do these come through marvelling at miracles? Can you surprise men, or dazzle men, or scare men into the kingdom of heaven? As a matter of fact, the miracles which Jesus wrought in His public ministry often seemed to hinder rather than to help His work. The excited crowds which

they attracted, elbowed and jostled each other, eager to gratify a low craving for the marvellous, but showing no desire to learn and follow truth. Faith which is founded merely on miracles is vain. The despondent cry of Jesus in later days, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" (John 4:48), echoes Moses' expostulation with Israel at Rephidim when they tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" (Ex. 17:7). And against any display of divine power to win admiration or superstitious following, there abides the command—whose significance is found by studying the scene at Rephidim—"Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God" (Deut. 6:16).

The third temptation does not begin with "If thou be the Son of God," because it is concerned, not with Christ's use of the divine power, but with the character of His proposed kingdom. The Jews were chafing under the Roman yoke, and ready to follow any leader who would promise them deliverance. With the wildest enthusiasm they would greet him, and lay down their lives to place him on the throne of David. Jesus was of royal descent, and might properly claim the Jewish crown. Why not establish the kingdom of God by first restoring the kingdom of David? Take the sword to win the scepter; and when this has been secured, then make all things work together for righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. But can the political kingdom be secured except by a sacrifice of the spiritual? Can a man serve two masters? If he would receive a crown from the people, Jesus must consult their selfish wishes and follow their leading; and to do that would in reality be to bow before the prince of this world and do his bidding. When that



fact is clearly recognized, the temptation is overcome, and the tempter is spurned. "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

*imp.* This brief outline of the three temptations is sufficient to show their official character. They may be profitably studied in their relation to Christ's three offices of prophet, priest and king. As a prophet He must feed the hungry multitude with the Word of God instead of giving them stones made bread. As a priest He must offer "a body bruised for our iniquities" instead of one that angels bear up in their hands. And as a king He must ever proclaim, "My kingdom is not of this world."

#### 4. The Later Repetitions.

It is a familiar thought that the temptations of the wilderness were set before Jesus again in His public ministry. Luke suggests this by his significant statement, "When the devil had ended the temptation, he departed from him *for a season*" (4:13). We shall find in our study of the various fields in which Jesus worked, not only that all these temptations were present, but that some particular one in each field predominated and shaped the issue. In Judea the rulers demanded a sign; in Galilee the people were clamorous for relief from bodily ills and physical wants; in Peraea and the coasts the constant expectation was of a political kingdom. And we shall find the work in each terminated by an act that seemed to be a surrender to the dominant temptation, but really was a rejection and exposure of it. In Judea this was the healing of the impotent man at Bethesda; in Galilee it was the feeding of the five thousand; in the final

ministry it was the triumphal entry. Such being the case, we can understand why Jesus related to His disciples so fully the struggle in the wilderness, though He said nothing about His other solitary experiences. He was endeavoring by this revelation to make them understand the nature of the struggles they witnessed in His public ministry, and to see in these the same temptations that Satan had presented at the outset. Also we find abundant reason for emphasizing this chapter in our Lord's life. It was the time when with deepest care He weighed and rejected the popular Messianic ideas, and accepted a higher ideal of what the Messiah's work and kingdom must be. When he went forth from the wilderness, the path henceforth to be followed lay clearly before Him. In the days of His public ministry we shall see Him more than once changing His plans of work and altering the emphasis of His teachings, as conditions changed or the needs of His hearers varied; but we shall find no convincing proof,—though many have sought it,—that He changed His own purpose and convictions, or received new light upon His mission. His invitations were to be rejected; His plans were to be frustrated; His own nation, instead of being His helpers in establishing the kingdom of God, were to compass His death:—all this was beyond His present knowledge, for who can foresee the wayward action of the human will? But no change for good or evil in the hearts of men would bring a new revelation of His Father, or alter the settled rule of His life: "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8:29).

## VIII

### THE FINAL PREPARATION

#### 1. The Witness of John the Baptist.

**J**ESUS left John immediately after the baptism (Mark 1:12); and there is no record that they ever again talked together. The work of John went on for weeks with increased energy and with a new message, "The Messiah, though you know him not, is in your midst" (John 1:26). The conception of the Messiah as living in concealment and then suddenly coming forth was a popular one (cf. John 7:27), and gave force to John's words. Such a startling Messianic proclamation could not be ignored by the Sanhedrin, especially by its Pharisaic members (John 1:24); and since John was of priestly family they sent a committee of priests and Levites to investigate. It came to John with the question, "Who art thou?"

The hour was one of temptation for the Baptist,—a temptation springing, like that of his Master, out of an earnest desire to bring in the kingdom of God. If only he could claim special authority for himself, how much more weight would be added to his message! The temptation grew greater with each suggestion of the committee. "Art thou the Messiah?": that had already been set before him by the people and had its answer (Luke 3:15 f.); so now it was easy to say, "I am not." "Art thou Elijah?": if they were willing to receive him as such (cf. Matt. 11:14), he could do the work that Malachi had foretold Elijah would

do (Mal. 4:5). "Art thou the prophet?", i.e., the one foretold in Deut. 18:15, who would, so the Jews expected, usher in the Messianic period: surely he could claim as much as that for himself; and what power it would give him! With increasing brevity John put these temptations away, remaining faithful to his one commission as "the voice in the wilderness,"—the impersonal herald of the Messiah. If we were to accept Renan's theory that Jesus, in order to increase His influence, allowed the people to cherish a false belief that He was the Messiah and could work miracles, then we must pronounce John more honest and unswerving than his Master.

This happened in Bethany beyond the Jordan, which probably was at a ford of the river about twelve miles south of the Sea of Galilee, and a day's journey from Nazareth. John had moved northward since he baptized Jesus. The day was the first of a week ending with the marriage at Cana; and if, as Edersheim suggests, the marriage was on Wednesday, which was usually chosen for a maiden's wedding, the day would be the preceding Thursday.

On the next day (Friday) Jesus, who had finished His temptation in the wilderness and was on His way to Nazareth, came where John was preaching, and naturally drew near to hear what message the Baptist was proclaiming. If John had yielded to the temptation of the previous day, and was now figuring as Elijah the Second or the prophet whom Moses foretold, we can imagine the confusion which would have overwhelmed him, when he suddenly saw Jesus approaching. But John had been faithful to his mission; and, as Jesus appeared in the edge of his audience, he eagerly pointed Him out: "Behold the Lamb of God!

There is the one whom I foretold,—the one upon whom I beheld the spirit descending!” (John 1:29-34).

The term “Lamb of God” as a name for the Messiah was taken by John from Isaiah 53:7. Its use at this time may indicate the impression Jesus had made upon him when they talked together before the baptism. Whether the additional words, “that taketh away the sin of the world,” were spoken by the Baptist or are the interpretation of the term by the author of the Fourth Gospel, is disputed. It is difficult to believe that the Baptist could have had such a clear idea of the world-wide mission of the Messiah; yet there are glimpses of that mission in the Book of Isaiah; and John,—as his preaching to Gentile soldiers and to publicans indicates,—had pressed beyond the narrow limits of Jewish race prejudice. The wonderfully high praise which Jesus later on bestowed upon him (Matt. 11:11) would make us ready to believe that his conception of the Messiah was vastly above that of any other Jewish teacher. Be this as it may, the exclamation of John produced little effect; probably because the hearers failed to grasp its full meaning, while Jesus withdrew from sight before they fairly saw whom John was pointing out. Such public announcement with its consequent excitement was not the way in which to begin His ministry.

The next day (Saturday) was the Jewish Sabbath, when the people would remain at their homes, and John would have the companionship of none but his intimate disciples. Jesus, too, would not pursue His journey, but would remain there at Bethany. And thus it happened that John, as he was in the company of two Galilean fishermen,—Andrew and the John who tells the story,—again caught sight of Jesus, who was



walking by the place where they were standing. He gazed earnestly at Him (so far as we know it was the last time he ever saw Jesus) as if to make sure that he was right in the identification of yesterday, and then cried out again, "Behold the Lamb of God!" <sup>and</sup> The two disciples, hearing John thus speak, pressed after Jesus with reverent curiosity; and the Baptist was left alone. He had fulfilled his mission; henceforth he must decrease as the one to whom he had borne witness increased.

## 2. The Call of the First Disciples.

When the two disciples at Jesus' invitation came to His abode, it was "about the tenth hour." According to Jewish reckoning the first hour began at sunrise; and the tenth hour would be about four o'clock in the afternoon. The day then would be nearly over; and the statement, "they abode with him that day," would mean simply a two hours' visit. If, however, we accept the opinion of many scholars that John reckoned time after our own manner (thus meaning by the tenth hour ten o'clock in the morning), it helps us here and also in other passages of his Gospel (4:6; 5:52; 19:14). Before the two disciples settled down for their first precious day with Jesus, Andrew,—doubtless with Jesus' permission,—went in search of his brother, Simon, and with a glad "Eureka!" brought him to Jesus. At the same time John probably went in search of his brother, James, and a little later brought him also. (This is the inference from "He first findeth" (1:41) where the Greek means first of the two seekers; though some of the best manuscripts read, "He findeth first," i.e., before he did anything else.)

The following day (Sunday) Jesus prepared to resume His journey, and the four disciples were ready to follow Him. But there was another to be added to their company, Philip, a fellow townsman of Andrew and Peter, about whom they had told Him. Jesus Himself went in search of him and found him. And Philip in turn must find and bring Nathanael,—probably Bartholomew, i.e., the son of Tolmai (cf. Simon Bar-jonah, Matt. 16: 17) who had come from Cana (John 21: 2) to the preaching of John. Thus in this simple and natural way six disciples were gained, all of whom later on were to become apostles.

Jesus' knowledge of what is in man (John 2: 25) was shown by His giving Simon the new name, Peter, and still more by His conversation with Nathanael. In repeated instances later on this same knowledge was displayed; though whether it was supernatural or only the result in the highest degree of that power to read men which all leaders must possess we cannot say. Certainly it was part of His equipment for the Messianic work; to reveal God to man, He must thoroughly know man as well as God. What the experience of Nathanael was when underneath the figtree before Philip called him, remains untold: but it was something so intimate and sacred that the mere discovery that Jesus knew it turned Nathanael's doubt into belief, and called forth his declaration, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel."

How much meaning shall we put into these early confessions of faith in Jesus? And can we reconcile this enthusiastic welcome of the Messiah with the fact that, according to the Synoptics, these same disciples were very slow to recognize Jesus as the Messiah; and Peter's confession of faith, after months of patient

teaching by Jesus, was treated as a marked advance in spiritual discernment (Matt. 16: 16 f.)? In search of an answer we must bear in mind that even John the Baptist had very imperfect ideas about the Messiah; and these men had only partially grasped the ideas of John. They were following Jesus, not from any spiritual recognition of Him and intelligent sympathy with His mission, but because their teacher had pointed Him out and endorsed Him. They had, therefore, a great deal to learn before they could realize the true nature of Him whom they followed, and receive the benediction, bestowed first upon Peter, for such a realization. They might now hail Jesus as the Messiah, and yet later on, when He failed to fulfill their present Messianic expectations, fall into doubt, as did the Baptist himself. It is also possible, as Garvie suggests, that Jesus at first did not realize the obstinacy and unbelief and the degree of unpreparedness confronting Him, and so began by revealing His Messiahship more fully than later on. While there is no complete revelation, yet His conversation with these first disciples and His labors in Judea are with less reserve and more confidence than in Galilee. Nevertheless, His words to Nathanael (John 1: 51) must have been almost enigmatic. Their explanation lies along the line of Jacob's dream at Bethel:—Jesus is the ladder between earth and heaven, upon which God's messages pass; Nathanael shall have surer grounds for faith than Jesus' knowledge of his secret thoughts; he shall see in Him a revelation of God, a knowledge of things divine, that is possible only for the Son of man.

Monday and Tuesday are unrecorded days; we know simply that on one or both of them, Jesus and His disciples made the journey to Nazareth. Why He

should go into Galilee, taking the six, when so soon He was to return to the Passover feast, we can only guess. Personal and domestic reasons may have influenced both Him and these Galilean disciples; or He may have wished to get them away from the excitement of John's work, that their new-born faith in Him might be educated and strengthened. He arrived home soon enough to have the news reach Cana, a few miles away, and an invitation come to Him and His disciples to attend the wedding in Nathanael's town on Wednesday. Mary's activity in the marriage feast suggests that she was a relative or at least an intimate friend; but that the marriage was of Nathanael or in his home is improbable. We note that Jesus came back to Cana again after His Judean ministry (John 4:6); this increases the probability that His relatives or close friends lived there.

### 3. The Miracle at Cana.

Of all Christ's miracles this is "in some respects the most perplexing" (Bruce). But the very things that puzzle us, e.g., the mutual conduct of Mary and Jesus, are proofs of its historicity; a fabricator would have left them out. The story is that of an eye-witness who remembers clearly the whole scene. It suits John in his old age recalling the first miracle of his Master; but some of the details must have been given him by Mary who, tradition says (cf. John 19:27), lived with him after the crucifixion.

The miracle is a "nature miracle," and so cannot be explained as the influence of Jesus' personality, though Beyschlag and Lange do suggest hypnotism,—(Lange has much to say about "magnetized water"). The easiest way for the sceptic to dispose of it would be to

pronounce the story a myth. Strauss does this, basing it upon Moses' turning water into blood, and Elisha's changing bitter water into sweet. But if John was an eye-witness, and the gospel report is his, a myth is here impossible. Other explanations are that John himself was "well drunken," and did not know what really did happen (quoted by Strauss); that Mary brought the wine, and gave the signal to her son to produce it (Gforer); that Jesus jokingly said, "Here is some wine I have made out of water" (Paulus); that it is a parable changed into a supposed real occurrence (Weisse); that it is an allegory,—water represents John the Baptist; wine, Jesus; the transformation is the passing from one dispensation to the other (Baur and in substance Keim); that there was a spiritual exaltation in which water became, in the best sense of the word, wine (Ewald); that it was a miracle of Providence,—the wine was brought opportunely by some one (Weiss). The whole subject of miracles must be considered later on; so we need not pause to discuss these sceptical explanations.

That it was wine which Jesus created does not present a difficulty. Wine,—and wine that might intoxicate,—was the ordinary beverage, the tea and coffee, of Palestine. The amount was large,—about five hundred quarts; but there is no reason to think that in the wedding festivities, which might last a week, it would not all be used.

The strongest objection to the miracle is that, at first sight, it seems a needless one, i.e., it ministers to no real want, and is, therefore, purely a show miracle, like descending from the temple pinnacle. If this is so, we may well doubt the story; for certainly a useless miracle is incredible. What reasons, then, may be



found for changing the water into wine? Possibly the bringing of these six disciples on briefest notice was what caused the wine to run short; in which case it was a courteous act on the part of Jesus to supply an embarrassing lack for which He was responsible. (Note that as there were six disciples so there were six water-jars.) But a more important reason was that the new disciples needed such "a sign." John the Baptist worked no miracle (John 10:41): this act of Jesus would teach them that their new teacher was greater than John. John was an ascetic, never drinking wine nor attending feasts; this miracle at a wedding would show them that Jesus was not in spirit the same, and that their ideas gained from John must be broadened into a fuller conception of what the kingdom of God was like. The miracle manifested Jesus' glory; but it was not a show miracle; it was a gracious condescension to the needs of the wedding guests and of the disciples.

The attitude of Mary towards her son is at first sight perplexing. To understand it we must remember that Mary had kept in the silence of her heart the wonderful things about her child, and knew Him to be the promised Messiah, but had only imperfect ideas of what the Messiah was to be. His return from the baptism with a band of disciples would arouse her expectation that now He was about to proclaim his Messiahship. She may, also, have learned from the disciples (James and John were possibly her nephews) what had happened when He and they were with John the Baptist. Hence her belief that He could perform the miracle, which led to the desire that He would perform it to make the guests believe on Him. She suggested an act fitly introducing a sensuous Messianic

kingdom; unconsciously she set before Him the bread temptation of the wilderness. Christ's answer was not so much to her words as to her unspoken thought. It is not discourteous (cf. John 19:26 for "woman"), nor is it as stern as the rebuke to Peter when he presented a temptation (Mark 8:33); but it is a firm statement that her wishes must not regulate His Messianic course. The time has not yet come for Him to announce Himself publicly; and He never can be the kind of Messiah she expects. Mary accepts His position though not understanding its necessity; but she persists in her desire that He should supply the wine; and her faith, shown by her command to the servants, prevails. The miracle may be wrought for her and the disciples; though the guests must not know of it. It is performed in the most quiet way. Only Jesus, Mary and the disciples with the servants witness it; for the water-pots are outside the banqueting room, and evidently Jesus and His disciples, who would not be honored guests, are also outside,—Mary is superintending the servants. What measure of faith was kindled in the servants by the miracle, we do not know; but for the disciples it was a manifestation of divine power which strengthened their confidence that they had indeed found the Messiah. And, when, after a brief sojourn at Capernaum, they went with Him up to Jerusalem for the Passover, they must have expected He was about to begin His reign over Israel; though they could not have grasped the character of that reign.

## IX

### THE JUDEAN MINISTRY

#### 1. The General Character.

**J**UDEA was a small region; in length from Bethel to Beersheba fifty-five miles, and in width from the Shephelah (the low hills on the west) to the Jordan valley about twenty-five or thirty; and nearly half of this area was wilderness. The hill plateau was perhaps thirty-five miles long and twelve to seventeen broad. In the first century, as now, because there was little opportunity for agriculture or commerce, the population was comparatively small, and the people gained their living largely from the multitude of pilgrims coming to Jerusalem. These must be fed, lodged and cared for: and cattle, sheep, doves and various other sacrifices must be provided for their temple offerings. In fact, the Judeans lived by the temple services; and being thus isolated from all except the pilgrim world, and centering their thoughts on the temple and the law, they could hardly help becoming narrow-minded, conceited and bigoted.

If Jesus was to present Himself to the nation as its Messiah, the proper place in which to do this was the temple at Jerusalem. The general expectation, based on Mal. 3: 1, was that the Messiah would first appear here. And in the thought of Jesus Himself no place could be more fitting than His Father's house for beginning the work to which His Father had called

Him. Also, if He was to challenge the nation to pass upon His claims, the proper body to address was the Sanhedrin. It ruled and represented the people; and one of its special duties was to denounce a false Messiah, or to proclaim the true one when he should appear. The endorsement of the Sanhedrin was the quickest way of securing universal acceptance. If the rulers said, "Here is our long expected Messiah," not only the people of Judea but all the Jews everywhere would give him enthusiastic welcome. The purpose of the Judean ministry, therefore, was to win the leaders in Jerusalem,—the Pharisees and Sadducees,—especially those who constituted the Sanhedrin. When they were won, the task of winning the nation was practically accomplished.

## 2. The Appeal to the Sadducees.

We think of the temple as the sacred center of worship, and only with difficulty realize that it was also and necessarily the greatest business institution of the Jews. It handled vast sums of money coming from the temple tax, which all Jews everywhere were expected to pay, and from various money offerings prescribed or voluntary. The treasure which Crassus carried off when he plundered it, 54-3 B.C., is said to have amounted to ten thousand talents, which would be more than ten million dollars; and other spoilers found it equally rich. It was likewise the center of an enormous traffic in animals for sacrifice and in articles needed by the worshippers for their vows and offerings. At the time of the great feasts, when myriads of pilgrims thronged Jerusalem, the sales must have been beyond calculation.

Even the strongest endeavor would hardly prevent

the business part of the temple life from overshadowing the religious part; but the ruling priests of that day, the house of Annas and their associates, had no disposition to put forth such endeavor. They were notorious for greed, and cared little for the worship in which they were the chief officials, except as a means of heaping up private fortunes. It was easy for them to monopolize the temple traffic. Every animal for sacrifice must undergo priestly inspection to see that it was without blemish; this put within their power to reject all animals not bought from their own agents. Likewise, the money paid into the temple must be of a special coinage; and all the sacred coins would soon be in their possession, when they could charge a high rate of exchange for them. They were not slow to take advantage of such tempting opportunities. Indeed, under pretence of making purchases convenient for strangers, they had even placed cattle booths and exchangers' tables in the court of the Gentiles, thereby turning into an emporium (John 2: 16) the only part of the temple into which devout heathen could enter for worship, and which, for that very reason, seems to have been specially valued by Jesus. It was with good cause that He said, "Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers" (Mark 11: 17). All the devout, had they dared, would have said the same.

The cleansing of the temple is told both by Mark, whom the other Synoptists follow, and by John; but the former places it at the close of Jesus' ministry, and the latter at the beginning. Were there two cleansings or only one; and if only one, when was it? For reasons better stated later on, we may conclude that the only cleansing was at the beginning of the ministry, and



that the Synoptists really describe this opening incident, though they put it so much later.

After the marriage at Cana, Jesus spent a short interval at Capernaum, where some of His disciples and possibly of His own family resided, and then, as the Passover drew nigh, went up to Jerusalem. Here the preparations for the feast gave Him an opportunity to challenge the Sadducees, and compel them either to recognize His authority by reforming the abuses in the temple, or else to refuse to accept Him as the one whom Malachi had foretold. Coming into the court of the Gentiles where the vendors and the money changers were already active, He drove them out by stern command and vigorous action; and He also stopped another desecration,—the use of this court by the citizens of Jerusalem as a convenient shortcut (Mark 11:16). There is no need to suppose that He used supernatural power in accomplishing this; the evident approval of His act by the worshippers, and the guilty consciences of the traders, who were taken completely off their guard, would be enough to ensure His success. Nor can He be condemned for unrighteous anger and unnecessary violence. His disciples, as they watched the scene, recalled the Messianic prophecy, "Zeal for Thy house shall eat me up" (Ps. 69:9); and such consuming indignation was proper in the presence of this irreverence and greed. Gentle reproof would have produced little effect upon the traders; though the scourge of cords was for the cattle and not for the men who sold them.

If Jesus had been simply a reformer, there was sufficient reason for His act. But the same abuse had met His gaze at each previous visit to the temple, and had called forth no correction because Jesus was never

merely a reformer. He had come this day as the Messiah to the temple,—as the Son to “My Father’s house” (there was a deeper meaning in this phrase now than when He used it as a boy of twelve); and He acted with divine authority. The attention of the Jews (by “Jews” John always means the leaders—in this case specially the Sadducees) was at once excitedly centered upon Him. And that they recognized His claims to be more than those of a self-appointed reformer, is shown by their demand for a sign, i.e., a miracle (John 2:18):—no sign would be necessary in justification of an evidently needed reform. Here at the very outset their demand put before Him the “temple temptation” of the wilderness.

His answer (2:19) was purposely ambiguous; perhaps, also, part of it has been omitted. From Mark 14:58, which is the report of false witnesses but whose falsity seems to have been in the statement “I will destroy,” we might conclude that His words were, “Destroy this temple that is made with hands; and in three days I will build another not made with hands.” If so, it was a more significant statement than that, if He were put to death, He would rise again after three days,—and a statement better suiting the situation. The temple made with hands which the Sadducees were destroying by turning it into a den of robbers was to be supplanted by the spiritual temple which in a very little while (“three days”) Jesus would raise up. The thought was the same as that expressed to the Samaritan woman when He said the hour was at hand “when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth” (John 4:21-24). Nevertheless, the significance which the apostle John found in the words as he pondered them in later years may also

have been there. These men who turned God's house into a source of gain would not hesitate even to murder the Messiah if he interfered with their gains; and the resurrection from the dead would be the crowning manifestation of His divinity, through which the new and spiritual religion would be established (Rom. 1:4). For the present, however, the cleansing of the temple seemed to have been a fruitless task. On the morrow the priests regained their authority, the traders were back in their places, and the denunciations of the young man from Nazareth were almost forgotten.

### 3. The Appeal to the Pharisees.

From the Sadducees Jesus next turned to the Pharisees. Doubtless they had approved of the cleansing of the temple, though they would not like the credit of it to be gained by an unknown Galilean: but the act was not specially calculated to call their attention to His Messianic claims. The case was different when in the Passover week many of the people "believed on His name," i.e., thought Him to be the Messiah, "beholding his signs which he did." These believers must have been mainly pilgrims who had come to the feast (cf. 4:45): for the men of Jerusalem would wait the opinion of the rulers. What the signs were we are not told; probably they were miracles of healing; certainly their purpose was not to create belief, for He refused to accept the belief created by them. With His knowledge of the human heart, He perceived the shallowness of a faith that has no deeper foundation than wonderment. Whatever called forth these miracles, their most important effect was to compel the Pharisees to consider Jesus; for as soon as men began to discuss whether He was the Messiah, they

felt that this was a question which must be answered by themselves.

Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee (John 7: 50) and a member of the Sanhedrin, reveals the attitude towards Jesus of the best and most thoughtful of the Pharisees. He was by nature conservative but not hide-bound,—cautious but not cowardly; he came to Jesus by night not because he feared Jewish hatred (there was no reason for fear until later on, 19: 38, cf. 9: 22; 12: 42), but because night was the best time for a quiet, prolonged conversation. That a rabbi of Jerusalem,—the proudest being in the world,—sought an interview with a young Galilean layman shows the profound impression Jesus had made upon Nicodemus and his associates. Yet notice from the way in which he addressed Jesus (3: 2) how little he had advanced towards a recognition of Him as the Messiah. He saw in him “a teacher” (not “*the* teacher” as Jesus with some sarcasm called him, 3: 10), “come from God,” i.e., not trained in the schools, but still deserving to be called rabbi, as truly possessing divine wisdom and having evident proofs of divine favor. There was a little unconscious patronage in his “we know” such as justified Jesus’ sarcasm.

The conversation with Nicodemus must have been long and serious; but of it there is preserved only a few striking sentences which are evidently given verbatim, since here and only here in the Fourth Gospel we find the term, the kingdom of God. The record is joined without a break to the comments of the evangelist, so that we do not know where the words of Jesus end; though 3: 12 seems the natural termination, since that which follows would have been incomprehensible not only to Nicodemus but also to the disciples

who bore witness with Jesus (3:11). Nicodemus came to discuss the Messiahship, and at once found himself confronted with the question of the nature of the kingdom over which the Messiah should reign. Evidently that was the first question to be settled; for the qualifications of a king depend upon the nature of his kingdom. But Nicodemus had taken for granted that the Pharisaic idea of the kingdom was correct, and was not able to grasp any other. A spiritual kingdom visible and open only to those who were born from above, a kingdom to be entered by penitence and the quickening of the Spirit, was a mystery to him. In bewilderment he could only ask, "How can these things be?", and cease to question further. The failure of Nicodemus to grasp even the simpler teachings concerning the kingdom is merely one instance of the inability of the Pharisees to see in Jesus the Messiah; for it was of them collectively that He said, "If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

#### 4. The Work in Judea.

The work in Jerusalem had failed. The Sadducees were of the opinion that Jesus was a fanatic, perhaps a dangerous one; the Pharisees pronounced Him an enigma, but were sure that if His teachings contradicted theirs, He was to be condemned. There was no chance of His acceptance by the Sanhedrin; in fact, He was considered of too little importance for its attention. The failure is not surprising, for the obstacles were great. Not only was He a Galilean and therefore despised by the Judeans; but He had been baptized by John, and taken His disciples from those of John and his followers. And above all else pride



and selfishness and lack of spiritual perception barred the reception of a spiritual kingdom and its appointed king.

Evidently the work of preparation which John had been doing was not complete. Jesus, therefore, when He left the city at the end of the Passover week,—departing because it was useless or unsafe to remain longer,—set His disciples to work in Judea along the Baptist's lines, with which they were familiar. In this way the work of the Baptist would be enlarged; and possibly the disciples themselves might become more fully prepared for their own future mission. Because it was preparatory work Jesus could not personally engage in it; He must act as the Messiah, and not as the forerunner. What He did while His disciples were baptizing we are not told. The work was highly popular,—the people who had flocked to John came streaming forth again to these new preachers; but it was not a work upon which Jesus laid great emphasis or which continued long. When “a Jew” (3:25), probably a member of the Sanhedrin and a Pharisee (4:1), tried to hinder John by making his disciples jealous of their seeming rivals, Jesus stopped it. The closing statement, “He left Judea” (4:3), is more precisely, “He abandoned Judea,” i.e., gave up utterly His present attempt to win recognition there. We shall see that He made one more effort; for the visit to the unnamed feast (5:1), though much later in time, is really the closing act of this Judean ministry.

### 5. The Work in Samaria.

When Jesus started to return to Galilee, “he must needs pass through Samaria” (4:4). This explanation is for readers who are not familiar with the

topography. True, very scrupulous Jews went around by Peraea; but this was not the shortest or the usual route for Galileans going to the feast (Jos. Ant. 20: 6: 1). A day's journey would bring Him to Jacob's well, near the little town of Sychar. He reached the well "about the sixth hour" (John 4: 6), which may have been high noon, but more probably was six in the evening,—the regular hour of coming for water. If the season was midsummer, there was plenty of time for what followed.

The conversation with the woman at the well,—learned probably by John from the woman herself, who was so deeply impressed by it,—shows Jesus' marvellous skill in dealing with individuals. It ended with a plain declaration of His Messiahship. There were reasons why He could make this declaration in Samaria when He could not in Judea. The Samaritans accepted the Pentateuch, but rejected the other books of the Old Testament. This deprived them of the rich, spiritual teachings of the prophets and psalms, but also hindered visions of future national greatness and of the marvellous transformation which should take place in Messianic days. They borrowed from their Jewish neighbors the hope of a Messiah: but their expectation was that he would be chiefly a teacher,—the one described in Deut. 18: 15 where Moses is represented as foretelling, "Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (cf. John 4: 19, 25, 29; Acts 3: 22 f.). To those who held this expectation Jesus could say plainly, "I that speak unto thee am he," without the danger of having His mission misunderstood; and the accent of authority in His teaching would lead them to accept

Him as indeed "the Saviour of the world,"—though the term in their lips would not have the rich significance it was to possess later on.

The receptivity of the woman cheered the heart of Jesus (John 4: 32); and He used it to cheer the hearts of His disciples who, we may suppose, were naturally discouraged by the fruitlessness of their work in Judea, and had been keeping up their spirits by quoting the saying,—perhaps a popular proverb,—“One must wait four months after sowing before the harvest comes.” He pointed out to them that already they might begin to reap (possibly ripe grainfields in sight shaped His figure of speech), and to reap where they had not previously labored in preparation.

Those two days in Sychar were full of the joy of teaching men eager to receive instruction,—one of the “few glad surprises” in the life of Jesus. But to carry on this work among the Samaritans would end all possibility of work among the Jews, who would be hostile to any one associating with their despised and hated neighbors. Possibly it was some report of these days at Sychar which gave rise later on to the slander of His enemies that He was a Samaritan (John 8:48). His mission was to the Jews, and Samaria must wait until it was accomplished; but this brief stay among a receptive people was inspiring to both Master and disciples, and in some degree was a preparation for the great, popular work in Galilee. Concerning the permanent fruit of His teachings at Sychar we know nothing; but possibly the ready reception of Christianity in Samaria when Philip the evangelist preached there (Acts 8: 5), may have been because Jesus prepared the way.

## 6. The Second Miracle at Cana.

That this is the same as the healing of the centurion's servant (Matt. 8:5-13), is not probable. The resemblances are few; the differences many. John treats it as the epilogue to the Judean ministry, even as the other miracle at Cana was the prologue. That ministry, so barren in Judea, was already beginning to bear fruit in Galilee. Jesus had gone forth with the lack of honor which a prophet has in his own country; He returned to meet an enthusiastic reception because the Galileans had seen the things He had done at Jerusalem (John 4:44-45).

The measure of faith already aroused in some hearts is shown in this second "sign" at Cana. A nobleman or king's officer hastens from Capernaum,—a day's journey,—to beg the healer to come to his dying son. That Jesus can heal at a distance is beyond his faith:—naturally enough, for the only persons who ever rose to that height were two Gentiles (Matt. 8:5-13, 15:21-28), and the faith of the Roman centurion astonished Jesus, while that of the Syro-Phoenician woman called forth His open praise. The effect of the Judean ministry is seen in Jesus' despondent cry, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will in no wise believe!" (John 4:48). And then, to test the nobleman's faith, He says, "Go thy way: the child liveth." With a faith increased to the point of believing that Jesus can heal his son without going to Capernaum the father prepares to return; but it is now seven in the evening (4:52): so he must postpone his journey until morning. On his way home the next day, he meets his servants hastening to tell him that yesterday, at the precise hour when Jesus was speaking with him, the

fever left his son. This completes the progress of faith, bringing about full belief on the part of the nobleman and his whole house (4:53). Just what did he believe? Probably that Jesus was truly the Messiah; but we have no means of knowing what his conception of the Messiah was. If we might identify this nobleman with Chuza, Herod's steward, we could see one fruit of the miracle in the gratitude which made his wife become, later on, a member of the band of women who ministered to Jesus and the Twelve as they journeyed in Galilee (Luke 8:3).

This miracle may have played its part in encouraging Jesus to undertake the Galilean ministry, in which so important a place was given to miracles of healing. But that ministry could not be begun while John was still doing the work of preparation. Jesus must wait until John had fulfilled his course. Probably He had to wait but a few weeks before the news came that John was imprisoned. Where He was and what He did meanwhile, we do not know:—the disciples went back to their boats on the lake.

### 7. The Length of this Ministry.

The work in Judea began at the Passover (April 12 or 11) of 27 A.D., and ended with the journey through Samaria to Galilee. That journey is often put in December, thus making the ministry eight months. The only authority for this is John 4:35, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest?", which is taken to mean that the harvest season, which begins in April, was four months away when Jesus spoke. But the words can equally well be interpreted as a proverbial statement meaning, "After the time of sowing one must wait till the time



for reaping"; and thus, as we have seen, they would express the thought of the disciples after their labors in Judea. The description of the journey,—fatigue, thirst, scarcity of water,—does not suit the cold, wet December of Palestine, but rather the dry, hot summer season. Moreover, the return to Galilee could not have been eight months after the Passover, for the impression made upon the Galilean pilgrims at that feast was still fresh (4:45). From its very nature the Judean work could not have been long. There was apparently but a week in Jerusalem (2:23); and a very few weeks would be enough to show that the work in the country was a hindrance rather than a help to the Baptist. We may, therefore, take the early part of May as the date of the return to Galilee.

The brevity and barrenness of the Judean ministry answer the question, Why is this ministry told only by John? The three Synoptists based their history on the story of Jesus as Peter used to tell it in his evangelistic preaching. He omitted the work in Judea, probably because it was brief and unsuccessful and contained so little that would interest and convert an audience of unbelievers. John, writing for Christians, saw how important it really was as a revelation of Jesus to the world, and for this reason put it in his narrative.

### 8. Its Possible Fruits.

There are few questions in all history more fascinating than the question, What would have followed, had the Sanhedrin accepted Jesus as the Messiah? Suppose that instead of rejecting Him they had recognized His claims, and put themselves at His bidding, and sent forth a proclamation to the people that their

Messiah was come,—what then? It seems as if the whole course of the world's history would have been changed. The Jews would have saved their own nation from destruction; for Jesus,—teaching them to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's,—would have kept them from coming into collision with the Roman power. They would also have been the best possible instruments for converting the world to Christianity. The Jew has rare qualifications as a missionary (Paul is a proof of that), and in the days of Jesus he had special facilities for such work. His brethren were in every important city throughout the lands of civilization (Acts 15:21); and every Jewish synagogue could be used as a center of Christian missions, even as the apostles vainly tried to use them later on. Doubtless the conversion of the world was delayed for centuries by the Sanhedrin's refusal to recognize Christ. What changes would have been made in Jewish worship and religious life, we cannot tell. The temple would have remained, preserved from the torch of the Roman soldier; but the temple ritual must needs be transformed. Indeed, if Jesus was accepted as the Messiah, a revolution must be wrought in the whole ecclesiastical system which was the pride of Judaism. This was the real reason why the Sanhedrin rejected Jesus. To receive Him would involve the transformation of all their conceptions of righteousness, the abandonment of their proud spiritual dictatorship, and the loss of princely revenues connected with the temple worship. That was clear from the outset. Is it to be wondered at, all things considered, that the rulers refused to recognize Him; and that the Judean ministry was a failure?

If the Jews had accepted Jesus as their Messiah,

what then about His death? This question is forced upon us; and its answer is far more difficult. Certainly He labored earnestly in the hope and expectation that they would accept Him; to hold otherwise, is to make His ministry a mere pretence. And certainly, if they had accepted Him, they would not have decreed that He must die, and lent themselves to compass His death. When we try to go beyond these two facts, in our thought of what might have been, we enter a region where men differ so greatly in their ideas about predestination and their theories of the atonement, that no unanimity of opinion is possible. To the present writer the following statements commend themselves:

1). Jesus from the beginning of His ministry knew that He must lay down His life for the world. Though He kept it a secret, like His Messiahship, yet as the evangelist John perceives, the necessity of a sacrificial death was in His thoughts from the outset (1:29, 2:19; 3:14, cf. Mark 2:20). Old Testament prophecy declared it; His knowledge of human nature confirmed it; His desire to reveal the love of the Father unto the uttermost led Him on to it. Two conceptions of the Messianic work run parallel through the Hebrew Scriptures,—one is of the triumphant king who crushes all foes beneath his feet; the other is of the suffering servant of Jehovah who pours out his life as an offering for sin. These two conceptions, so seemingly contradictory, Jesus was to combine in one, reconciling them by making the road to death the pathway to the throne.

2). The time and manner of that death He did not know at first. The divinely appointed mission of Israel was to be a light to the Gentiles, the preacher of salvation to the whole world. And while it was clearly

declared in the Old Testament that not all of Israel would accept this mission, yet there was reason to hope that many, perhaps the majority, would do so by first accepting Him as the Messiah and then being ready to bear His message to heathen lands. And His death, whether at the hands of His own countrymen (Is. 53) or of the heathen (Ps. 22), with the victory over death that must inevitably follow, would be the consummation of the message.

3). When the Jews, first the rulers and then the people, placed themselves in final opposition to Jesus, it became evident that His death would be at their hands. And from that hour, as we shall see, the character of His ministry was correspondingly changed. If the cross was to stand hard by the walls of Jerusalem, He must so labor that, on the one hand, the act of His nation in denying Him would be without excuse, and, on the other hand, His gospel still would be carried to the ends of the earth, as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

## X

### THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

#### 1. The General Character.

**G**ALILEE in area was a little larger than Rhode Island, its dimensions being about fifty miles from north to south and thirty from east to west. According to statements of Josephus its population in the middle of the first century was three millions. This seems incredible, since it is almost six times the population of Rhode Island; yet Josephus knew the land intimately, and was writing for Romans who knew it nearly as well. Certainly Galilee was a fair and fertile land, crowded with cities and villages, in strong contrast to Judea which had few large cities except Jerusalem and much of whose territory was wilderness. The contempt and derision heaped upon Galilee by the Judeans was partly caused by envy.

The people of Galilee, likewise, were in contrast to those of Judea. They were not as purely Jewish; indeed, the land had once been known as Galilee of the Gentiles (Is. 9:2). They were busy with trade and farming, accustomed to meet foreigners because great thoroughfares of the world passed through their land, noted for their bravery and independence, receptive to new ideas. Josephus says that they were "ever fond of innovations, and by nature disposed to changes, and delighting in seditions," though he has in mind specially the men of Tiberias with whom he had trouble. Herod



Antipas ruled Galilee, and ruled it well. He took no interest in the Jewish religion, and would not hinder Jesus from preaching doctrines that in Judea would be sternly suppressed by the Sanhedrin. The Galileans were just as devout as the Judeans; but the synagogue had far more to do with shaping their religious thought than the temple, and its influence was more wholesome. The Messianic hope was strong, perhaps even stronger than in Judea; for the apocalyptic literature, which nourished and shaped it, "was written for the most part in Galilee,—the home of the religious seer and mystic" (Charles).

His failure in Judea had by no means caused Jesus to abandon His attempt to win the Jews as a nation. The rulers would not accept Him; now He will appeal to the people. For this purpose He selects the more promising field of Galilee, and devotes Himself to work among the masses. If He can win the Galileans, either presently the Sanhedrin will be led to change its attitude and declare Him the Messiah; or else Galilee, already separate from Judea politically, will become separate spiritually; and the Messianic kingdom can have its center here. His work is simple in method, and uses Capernaum as its headquarters, this city being a good center because it is easy of access and important. Jesus has a home here (Mark 2:1, Matt. 4:13) either with Peter or with His own brethren and mother who possibly now lived here (John 2:12); and we notice that He is reckoned as a citizen of Capernaum in the collection of taxes (Matt. 17:24). From Capernaum He makes systematic tours throughout Galilee, teaching, preaching and healing the sick. Until increasing hostility closes their doors, He uses the synagogues on the days of public service (Saturday, Monday and

Thursday) ; but He is ready to teach wherever He finds an audience. Special disciples accompany Him, but probably do not preach, though they may help by personal work with individuals. The small expense of such tours is borne by friends and grateful acquaintances. In the opening chapter of Mark we have a description of one day's work which is a good sample of all.

If Jesus would win the people, He must, first of all, attract their attention. This is one purpose of the miracles; they serve as a church bell. But they draw many who are simply curious or eager for healing, and who, therefore, form an unpromising field in which to work. Next, He must proclaim that the kingdom of God is at hand, and endeavor to make His audience understand the nature of the kingdom. The current ideas are so unlike those which Jesus would impart that this task is one of great difficulty. His miracles by their character reveal the nature of the kingdom, and His teaching does this still more plainly: but the significance of the miracles is rarely grasped, and the teaching is often lost sight of, or even rendered impossible, through the excitement caused by the miracles. Finally, He must offer Himself to the people as the Messiah. He cannot do this until they understand and accept His form of the kingdom. They are ready to hail a Messiah who will usher in the kingdom they desire. Can Jesus induce them to accept the higher ideal? This is the problem before Him; and in solving it He will face again the temptations of the wilderness, especially the bread temptation.

The whole Galilean ministry is a period of great activity. Jesus is constantly surrounded by crowds; so that sometimes there is no chance even to eat, and He

has to steal away for an opportunity to pray. There are miracles almost by the wholesale. People hasten to bring their sick to Him for healing, and repeatedly we are told, "He healed them all." The excitement increases and becomes so great that His friends or family fear for His sanity, or at least, hearing that people are saying, "Jesus is beside himself," become anxious lest the statement be true (Mark 3:21). There is a general holiday atmosphere about the work in Galilee, which greatly troubles John the Baptist when he hears of it in his prison. At the same time there is an increasing activity and bitterness of enemies, especially of emissaries from the Sanhedrin; and the people are so slow to grasp the teachings about the kingdom of God that there is a necessary silence about the Messiahship.

Any chronological arrangement of the incidents in the Galilean ministry, or indeed in any of the ministries, must be most uncertain. The evangelists did not try to arrange their story chronologically. Probably they could not have done so, if they had tried. The order of Mark was in the main followed by Matthew and Luke; and the best thing we can do, if we must have a chronological arrangement, is to follow Mark, inserting the incidents not told by him as best we can. The length of this ministry depends upon the date which is selected as the conclusion of the Judean ministry. The imprisonment of John, which seems to have taken place very soon after Jesus left Judea, was the signal for beginning the Galilean work; and it continued until shortly after the feeding of the five thousand, which was near the time of a passover (John 6:4, cf. Mark 6:39). If the Judean ministry ended in May, 27 A.D., this passover must be that of March,

28 A.D. Those who make the Judean ministry continue until December, 27 A.D., cannot crowd all the work of the Galilean ministry into the next four months, and so have to suppose that the feeding of the five thousand was at the passover season of 29 A.D. But a period of sixteen months for the Galilean ministry is far too long; the situation and the narrative agree that the course of events leading up to the crisis which terminated the work was a rapid one.

## 2. The Popularity of Jesus.

From His first public appearance in Galilee Jesus was surrounded by crowds, excited, curious, busy but evidently friendly. Everything conspired to cause this. He began His Galilean ministry by working miracles, and with some fame as a miracle worker already gained in Judea. "There is an irresistible bias in Orientals of all religions to run after the mere shadow of a prophet or miracle worker," says Dr. Thompson; and when we remember how densely packed with cities and villages Galilee was, we can understand why a multitude would quickly collect around Jesus wherever He went. His opening message was similar to that of John the Baptist,—“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15),—a message which would always attract attention. And as the crowds listened to Him they were held spellbound, more by the novel manner of His preaching than by the subject-matter which often they failed to understand. “He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mark 1:22). No scribe ventured to give his own opinion except as supported by what some great rabbi of old had taught; but Jesus demanded that His hear-

ers should believe His words simply because He Himself uttered them. The difference between the two is the difference between "It hath been said by them of old time" and "Verily, I say unto you." The scribe sought to be "a well-cemented cistern," holding every word of his teachers; Jesus was a fountain, having within Himself the source of all His teachings. Like the rabbis He, too, was a teacher of the law; but "the rabbis interpreted the law as they found it: Jesus laid down a new law; and when He spoke, it was with the air of command" (Sanday). Again the catholicity of His preaching was novel and most attractive. His hearers were of all classes; for He was open to all, and had a message for all. The rich and the poor, the rabbis and the rabble, the Pharisees and the publicans, stood side by side in His audience, and felt that His interest embraced them without distinction. Above all, there was a winsomeness, a graciousness, about His words (Luke 4:22) which made His audience hang upon His utterances. It was the grace, the charm, that dwelt in the man Himself. The great religious leaders,—Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, Francis of Assisi and the rest,—have had this quality of personal charm which draws forth the love and devotion of disciples. Jesus had it pre-eminently, as incident after incident in His history shows. Men and women were attracted to Him and followed Him constantly, not because they understood His teachings or hoped for personal gain, but because their hearts went out to Him in complete surrender.

At the outset the sole show of opposition was by demoniacs; and His overthrow of this only increased the reverence and favor of the people (Mark 1:23-27). The Galileans were not disturbed, as the Judeans



would have been, by the fact that He healed on the Sabbath, though we notice that they would not bring their sick to be healed on that day (Mark 1:29-34). When He started out on His first tour in Galilee the synagogues were all open for His preaching (Mark 1:39). But when the authorities learned, in spite of His stern command to keep it secret, that a leper had crept into some city,—probably in the evening,—where Jesus was staying (Luke 5:12) and had been touched and healed by Him, they became alarmed, and for a time refused Him admission into the cities for fear of a repetition of such pollution. They evidently disapproved, if not of Him, of the outcasts He drew around Him. It was the faint yet definite beginning of a future opposition; and this is the reason why Mark tells the story in detail (1:40-45).

Although from this time hostility was steadily developing (as we shall see later), the fame of Jesus continued to spread, and general favor, also, seemed to be constantly increasing. Notes of this growing popularity are found in Mark 2:2, "And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, no, not even about the door; and he spake the word unto them," and 3:7-10, "Jesus with his disciples withdrew to the sea; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and beyond the Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing what great things he did, came unto him. And he spake to his disciples, that a little boat should wait on him because of the crowd, lest they should throng him; for he had healed many; insomuch that as many as had plagues pressed upon him that they might touch him." We notice also the effect of the miracle at Nain, "Fear

took hold on all; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet is arisen among us, and God hath visited his people" (Luke 7: 16-17), which is only somewhat stronger than the effect of the other miracles.

While multitudes thronged to Jesus, many of them came simply from curiosity, and others to gain healing for themselves or for friends. And though there seemed to be general favor, there was scanty spiritual response. The teachings about the kingdom of God produced so feeble impression and gained so little acceptance that Jesus could not proclaim Himself the Messiah of the kingdom. Indeed, the very fact that He spent so much of His time in teaching hindered His recognition; for a teaching Messiah was a Samaritan conception and not a Jewish. Evidently His popularity was superficial, and He could trust Himself unreservedly to the people here no more than in Judea. Meanwhile His enemies were steadily but stealthily working up an opposition.

### 3. The Choice and the Training of the Twelve.

It is in connection with the great spread of the fame of Jesus, and the thronging of multitudes to see and hear Him, that Mark narrates the choice of the Twelve. Jesus had begun His work in Galilee by calling from their fishing-boats four of the men who had been with Him in Judea,—Simon and Andrew, James and John (Mark 1: 16 f.). The call this time was to a permanent companionship in which He would prepare them for their life-work,—“Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.” Philip and Bartholomew were probably soon added to the number, as they, too, had been his companions in Judea. The call of Levi the publican, whose other name was

Matthew, took place after the first preaching tour. The promptness with which he left his place of toll and followed Jesus (Mark 2:14) is not strange, if already he had heard Jesus preach, and was filled with the desire to be a follower. How the others of the Twelve were gained is not told. But we know that in the Galilean ministry Jesus was always surrounded with a band of disciples, both men and women. Some of these came voluntarily; some He called; and on the other hand, some who wished to follow Him were discouraged and forbidden. Besides the Twelve there were others who were with Him almost constantly from the beginning of this ministry, so that Peter, when seeking to fill the place of Judas, had no difficulty in finding at least two men who met the requirements he laid down for an apostle,—“Of the men, therefore, that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection” (Acts 1:21-22). We might arrange the disciples of Jesus in four groups of increasing closeness, viz.:—believers, like Mary and Martha and Simon the leper, who welcomed Him to their homes but did not journey with Him; companions, like Mary Magdalene and Matthias, who formed the group of daily followers in His preaching tours; the Twelve, who were selected from this group to be apostles; and the innermost circle, Peter, James and John, who were privileged to share experiences (Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33) from which the rest of the Twelve were debarred.

It was when the work had increased to a point where Jesus felt the need of assistants, that He selected

twelve of His disciples to be apostles. As the name disciple means a learner, so the name apostle means one sent forth,—a missionary. Mark expressly states that the Twelve were chosen “that they might be with Him and that he might send them forth to preach” (3:14). The first purpose of the choice was a necessary preliminary to the second. These men must come in closest contact with Him (contact that an impostor would shun because his fraud would certainly be detected), must share His daily life, receive private explanations of His hard sayings, be patiently trained until they were in mind like Him, before they could be sent forth with a gift of miraculous powers to preach His gospel through the land. How far Jesus at this time had also in mind the training of these men against a future day when He would be taken from them and the work would be left in their hands, we can only surmise. Certainly it was such a training; though not until after the close of the Galilean ministry did He begin to speak of that day.

All the Twelve probably were Galileans, except Judas who was Iscariot, i.e., the man from Cherioth, a little town in Judea. The question why, with His knowledge of men, Jesus selected Judas Iscariot to be one of the number, is best answered by saying that Judas had in him the possibility of a magnificent apostle. Though Jesus later on says he “is a devil” (John 6:70), He also later on calls Peter, “Satan” (Matt. 16:23). One of the Twelve (unless his appellation, like that of the other Simon, indicates simply his character, “the zealous”) had been a Zealot, a fanatical opponent of the Roman government; another had been a tax collector, a servant of the same government: in this we see the sway of Jesus over spirits originally

most diverse. The social standing of the Twelve is often unduly disparaged. The father of James and John had hired servants (Mark 1:20); John knew the highpriest and had access to his palace (John 18:15); Matthew could give a great feast in his own home (Mark 2:15). Nor were they such illiterate men as is sometimes represented. The Jews emphasized education; and the statement about Peter and John that the Sanhedrin perceived they were unlearned and ignorant men (Acts 4:13), means simply that they were laymen and not rabbis. Still the choosing of the apostles from the common people rather than from the recognized leaders (and there were such who might have been chosen) is most significant; and the transformation of these fishermen, tax collectors, and the like, into the masterbuilders of the Christian church was a marvellous work,—a spiritual miracle.

#### 4. The Growth of Opposition.

When Jesus had withdrawn from Judea without gaining recognition, and John had been cast into prison for his fearless denunciation of the incestuous marriage of Herod Antipas, the rabbis at Jerusalem doubtless felt that this Messianic movement was practically ended. It had gone the way of numerous predecessors; and they could dismiss it from their attention. Soon the news came that the fanatic from Nazareth had reappeared in the North, and was drawing greater crowds than John ever drew. This roused them at once to send agents who should watch Him and, so far as possible, stop His work. The Pharisees of Galilee could feel little sympathy with what Jesus was doing; but their active opposition was instigated by emissaries from Jerusalem. Its growth is clearly indicated in



Mark by a series of incidents apparently selected for that purpose. They reveal a steady increase both in the gravity of the charges against Jesus and in the boldness with which these charges are uttered. It is worth while to study them in detail.

a). The Charge of Blasphemy (Mark 2: 1-12).

When Jesus was back in Capernaum, after His first missionary tour, His preaching place was His own house (2: 1), perhaps because the synagogue was closed to Him, though later on we find it open again (John 6: 59). Pharisees and doctors of the law, some of them from Judea and Jerusalem (Luke 5: 17), were present to hear Him and to watch His work. The others might be of little importance; but the rabbis from Jerusalem would be revered and influential. They heard Him say to the paralytic let down through the roof, "Thy sins be forgiven"; and a strong though unspoken resentment arose in their hearts. They could not have supposed that Jesus claimed authority to forgive sins as God or in the place of God; such a claim would have made them rend their garments in horror (cf. Mark 14: 63 f.). Rather He was blasphemously usurping the authority of the priests, who alone as God's appointed representatives could,—after proper penance and sacrificial offerings,—declare sins forgiven. Still, the prophets had taught that forgiveness did not depend upon penance or sacrifices, and had themselves pronounced sins forgiven (e.g., II Sam. 12: 13). So the scribes could not speak out against Him. And when His rebuke of their unspoken censure was followed by the miracle of healing, the popular excitement and favor were too great for them to do or say anything. But their hostile attitude towards Him was strengthened.

## b). Association with Outcasts (Mark 2: 13-17).

The call of Matthew-Levi, and the feast with other publicans and sinners in his house, stirred up the scribes and Pharisees more deeply. If they had been at all disposed to favor Jesus (as some may have been) because He seemed to be engaged in a work of purifying the people and preparing for the coming of the kingdom, this put an end to their favor. His ideal of a holy life was evidently far other than theirs. Still they could not say that He was actually transgressing any law of God; He was only failing to endorse their ideal. They now revealed their strong disapproval, not to Him but to His disciples, thus attempting to destroy His reputation and influence. The charge was, "He cannot really be a good man, or he would not thus share the life of bad people." The reply of Jesus was tactful (He did not wish to alienate these critics) but unanswerable: "The worse you hold these men to be, the more it is my duty to seek them out and make them better; if they were perfect men, they would not need my warning to repent and prepare for the kingdom of God."

## c). Neglect of Fasting (Mark 2: 18-22).

The scribes grew bolder in their opposition, and came directly to Him with the reproach, but in the form of a question, that He was not teaching His disciples to fast. (Note that Matthew puts the question in the lips of John's disciples; but Mark and Luke are better in assigning it to these same scribes.) Jesus in answer stated the true idea of fasting,—an outward expression of an inward frame of mind. And He declared, in two parable germs,—the patch on the garment and the new wine in old wineskins,—that His mission was not to improve the old, but to bring in

something wholly new. This continued disapproval of the scribes, and their evident hostility, called forth His first veiled hint of the sorrowful failure of His work (2:20). Since the fasts which they would have Him keep were not obligatory (for the law of Moses appointed only one, that on the Day of Atonement), the scribes could not openly condemn Him for neglecting them; but they had their opinion just the same.

d). Sabbath-Breaking (Mark 2:23-3:6).

The Sabbath was the peculiar glory of the Jews. Into no other part of their religious life did they enter with more enthusiasm, enlarging and guarding the Fourth Commandment by a multitude of rules and restrictions. At the same time their Sabbath-keeping was the supreme illustration of empty formalism,—an emphasis of letter instead of spirit, of sacrifice instead of mercy (Matt. 12:7). No wonder, then, that Jesus' treatment of the Sabbath repeatedly violated their rules (e.g., Luke 13:10-17 and 14:1-6, both belonging probably to the Galilean ministry), and that such violations aroused their hostility to the highest degree, and could be considered proof that He was a Samaritan, and had a devil (John 8:48).

Mark gives two instances to illustrate how the hostility arose. The first is Jesus' defence of His disciples when they plucked ears of grain as they passed through the fields on the Sabbath. The time must have been early in the Galilean ministry for the grain harvest ended in June. The statement, "One (or, a thing) greater than the temple is here" (Matt. 12:6), sounds like an echo of the teaching at the first Passover. The violation of the Sabbath consisted both in plucking the grain and also in rubbing off the chaff (Luke 6:1), which the Pharisees deemed a kind of threshing. It

was a petty matter, which the people at large would not regard; but the Pharisees were quick to criticise it, and Jesus' defence of His disciples, especially His words, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; so that the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath," centered their attention upon His attitude towards the Sabbath.

They now watched Him closely, and on another Sabbath waited in the synagogue to see whether He would heal a man with a withered hand. Jesus called the man forth, and then made an appeal to them to endorse an act of mercy performed on the Sabbath day. The heartless silence which was their only reply filled Him with righteous anger; and He ordered the man to stretch forth his hand, whereupon it was restored whole. The Pharisees were frenzied (Luke 6:11): the man was healed; and yet all that had been done was to command him to stretch forth his hand,—an act that could in no way be construed into a violation of the Sabbath. They felt that Jesus had made fools of them, and, therefore, was a specially subtle and dangerous transgressor; and the problem henceforth was how to overthrow Him (not necessarily to kill Him). Why the Herodians should be concerned, is not evident; they may have been roused against Him by His increasing popularity, and possibly Herod himself was beginning to be alarmed.

e). The Charge of Diabolism (Mark 3:22-30).

This had been concocted at Jerusalem in light of reports brought thither (Mark 3:22). It was a shrewd and plausible explanation of Jesus' career. The miracles could not be denied; but they might be credited to Satan working through Jesus; and this explanation would be in harmony with the Sabbath-

breaking and the other charges against Him. If the people could be made to accept it, His power was destroyed. The demand for miracles would not at once cease,—since sufferers are willing to try even unholy means for relief,—but no one would accept His teachings; and when the people had no physical wants to bring to Him, they would forsake Him utterly.

It would be unjust to call this charge of diabolism a malicious lie of the Pharisees. Probably they honestly believed it, and with seemingly good reason. They insisted that the character of any miracle must be determined from the character of the man who wrought it. In this they were right; the law itself had prescribed this test (Deut. 13: 1); and if we were passing judgment upon a miracle today, we would adopt it. And the Pharisees found proof, to their minds strong, that Jesus was an evil-minded man. They pointed out His fondness for feasting instead of fasting, which showed Him to be a glutton and wine-bibber; His delight in the society of publicans, harlots and other outcasts; His slight valuation of washings, tithes, circumcision and such legal ordinances; and above all, His deliberate disregard of the Sabbath. Was it not manifest to any thoughtful critic that this man was a child of Satan, and that He was deliberately seeking to lead the people into sin? If so, His miracles were lying wonders, wrought by the powers of evil.

The error of the Pharisees arose from deliberately ignoring the manifest spirit of truth and love which prompted and pervaded all the work of Jesus. In their dislike of Him they were willing to suppose that He was doing good from evil motives, and setting up a kingdom of God in service of Satan. To take such an attitude was to destroy all ability to perceive moral



distinctions. It was more than denouncing Jesus; it was pronouncing light to be darkness, good to be evil (Is. 5:20), which is the sin against the Holy Spirit. Any fuller, clearer revelation of the true character of Jesus would not avail to overcome their opposition, because the more He wrought the works of His Father, the more they would pronounce these works to be Satanic. Hostility could not reach a greater, more hopeless degree. The only question was, How far would it spread, and to what consequences would it lead?

### 5. The Change in Popular Feeling.

Certain incidents in the later part of the Galilean ministry are significant as showing that the general favor with which Jesus was regarded at the outset was slowly disappearing. One is His use of parables to convey the truth He wished to impart. We naturally think of a parable as an interesting and impressive form of teaching by comparison, whereby some event in the world of nature or some incident in human life is made to elucidate a spiritual truth. This is true; and the parables of Jesus are among the most familiar and helpful of His teachings. Nevertheless, a parable means nothing, if the interpretation is lacking; and only those who love the truth and are prepared to receive it can interpret it without aid. Even the Twelve more than once had to ask Jesus to explain some parable He had spoken (Matt. 13:36; 15:15). Accordingly we find Jesus putting His teachings into the form of parables most often when His audience is made up in part of sympathetic hearers and in part of enemies lying in wait to catch Him in His talk. The one class is instructed by them; the other class is

baffled. For example, when publicans and sinners were drawing near to hear Him, and the Pharisees and the scribes were standing apart and murmuring against His associates (Luke 15: 1-2), He told the parable of the Prodigal Son. To those who were heavy hearted from conscious sinfulness it was a picture of their own degradation, and a wonderful message of possible forgiveness; but the self-righteous critics found in it nothing but idle talk about a foolish boy and a doting father. The use of parables, therefore, in preaching the kingdom to the multitude by the seaside, "as they were able to hear it" (Mark 4: 1 f.), shows that among His hearers were some who were squarely hostile. The account follows directly after that of the charge of diabolism; and the connection of the two is obvious.

Another note of impending disaster was the question that came from John the Baptist, who was now a prisoner in Herod's palace at Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea, because he had dared to denounce the abominable marriage of the tetrach with Herodias. Reports of what Jesus was now doing in Galilee filled John with perplexity. He had foretold a Messiah who would thoroughly cleanse the threshing floor, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire; but Jesus seemed to have taken not the first step in such a ministry of purification. On the contrary, He was feasting with publicans, making friends with sinners, preaching forgiveness on easy terms to all. Naturally John was sore troubled, and wondered if he had made a mistake in declaring that Jesus was the one whose way he was sent to prepare. But though John might doubt his own discernment, he had no doubt concerning the honesty of Jesus; so he sent directly to Him the question, "Art

thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" (Matt. 11:3). To give an open affirmative answer, especially in the presence of the curious multitude, was impossible without breaking the silence that Jesus was observing about His Messiahship; and also it might lead John to suppose Him to be exactly the kind of Messiah John had announced would come. In place of doing this He sent back a reference to a prophecy of Isaiah (61:1-3) upon which John had nourished his Messianic expectations, and which Jesus was now evidently fulfilling by His miracles and teachings. Doubtless the answer restored John's shaken confidence, and led him to a closer study of the teachings of the prophet concerning the Messiah's mission. But the words with which Jesus closed His message, "Blessed is he whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me," are full of significance. If John, with all his confidence and devotion, found it difficult to believe that Jesus was establishing the kingdom of God, how many of those who lacked John's intimate knowledge of Jesus' sinlessness and high calling must not only have stumbled in following but have turned back in utter unbelief!

The rejection at Nazareth is a clear indication of increasing hostility. Luke puts it at the beginning of the Galilean ministry, possibly because the sermon in the synagogue seemed to illustrate the course of that ministry; but the whole situation, as well as the reference to miracles already wrought in Capernaum, suits better the much later date which Mark and Matthew give it. Although Jesus was received in His boyhood's village with something of the old-time favor or at least with much curiosity, and was asked to preach in the synagogue, He found an obstinate unbelief that

greatly hindered His power to work miracles,—an unbelief that astonished Him (Mark 6: 5-6); and according to Luke a murderous attempt was made upon His life. The attitude of these men of Nazareth arose, in part, from their previous acquaintance with Jesus; it is not easy to accept as a prophet the man whom you have employed as your carpenter, no matter how good a man and how good a carpenter he used to be. But the intensity of the antagonism indicates a greater cause. We can explain it only by supposing that Nazareth was the home of some whose intense religious zeal had been roused already against Jesus by His enemies. Whatever its cause, this rejection by those who had known and loved Him in earlier days must have been specially hard to endure.

The separate mission of the Twelve, which is related just after this (Mark 6: 7 f.), was the final attempt to win Galilee. The work of Jesus had been hindered by the constant presence and increasing opposition of His enemies. But if the Twelve be sent out, two by two, to work apart from Him, not only can they reach a wider audience, but possibly they may escape the antagonism He constantly encounters. Whether they succeed or not, the mission will be good training for them. It will not be easy, for they are going forth in the midst of enemies as sheep among wolves (Matt 10: 16), and must expect to find an opposition that will shut them out from many places. Their work, like their Master's, must be confined to their own land and people (Matt. 10: 5-6). And no labor is to be spent upon hostile cities; for the field is larger than they can cover before "the Son of Man be come,"—whatever that may mean (10: 23). Concerning the special instructions given them Kent

says, "Expressed in modern terms, Jesus commanded His disciples to do their work in the simplest and most direct way, to avoid unnecessary hindrances, and to work only where conditions were favorable; He also sought to impress them with the supreme importance and dignity of their task, and to prepare them for the misunderstandings and affronts which they were sure to meet."

We are not told how long the apostles were away or what experiences they underwent. They seem to have fulfilled their mission faithfully (Mark 6: 12 f.); and (if Luke 10: 1-20 is another account of the same episode) they returned to Jesus with joy, especially elated by their power to cast out demons. In this success of His missionaries, Jesus saw the earnest of the complete downfall of Satan; yet He admonished them to rejoice, not in what they could do, but in what they might be (Luke 10: 17 f.). It was probably during this absence of the Twelve, that the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus with the news of their master's martyrdom,—an event of special significance to Jesus, and leading up to a complete change in His ministry.

## 6. The Final Test.

John the Baptist fulfilled his course, and fell the victim of a wicked woman's hate. Behind that hate, however, can we not see the more execrable hate of the Pharisees, who not only rejoiced at his imprisonment and death, but may have actively intrigued to bring them about? Certainly Jesus laid the responsibility for John's fate not upon Herod or Herodias, but upon the Jewish rulers. At every stage John had been His forerunner. The annunciation to Zacharias



was the prelude of the annunciation to Mary. The voice crying in the wilderness drew Jesus forth from the seclusion of Nazareth to begin His public ministry. The first disciples of Jesus were trained for their work by following John. When the Judean ministry had ended in failure, the imprisonment of John was the signal to begin work in Galilee. A few months later, when the Galilean ministry was still seemingly on the flood-tide of success, the disciples of John came bringing the news of his death (Matt. 14:12); and Jesus heard in it the knell of His own. "Elijah is come already and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they would. Even so shall the Son of Man also suffer of them" (Matt. 17:12). The lack of spiritual discernment which had kept them from recognizing that John was Elijah would keep them from recognizing that Jesus was the Messiah; and the fate of each would be similar.

On the surface there appeared no reason to despair of Galilee. The crowds that followed Jesus were not diminishing; and the Twelve, who had just returned from their independent mission, reported much success. True, the Pharisees had grown bold and bitter, and were dogging His steps with the charge that He was a son of Beelzebub, teaching dangerous errors and working miracles by the aid of Satan. But they had no power to arrest His work, so long as the people were loyal to Him. Nor was there danger that the political authorities in Galilee would interfere. The fame of Jesus had already reached the palace; and doubtless they were discussing whether His course tended towards insurrection. But the guilty conscience of Herod Antipas suggested the dread thought that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead with power

of miracle-working gained by the resurrection (Mark 6: 14). Against such an enemy the king would not take steps unless forced to do so.

The real danger lay in the purely selfish and superficial character of most of Jesus' following. Men were enthusiastic over Him; but why? Because He was healing diseases, and casting out devils, and bringing the dead to life. His popularity was scarcely other than that of a marvellous physician. The villages into which He entered were crowded with people seeking relief from sufferings; their importunity knew no limits; they pressed upon Him when He walked the streets; they tore off the roof when He was in a house; they gave Him leisure for neither food nor prayer. But when He began to preach, then at once they lost interest. They cared little for His doctrines; they interrupted His most earnest discourses with frivolous comments or selfish requests; the Sermon on the Mount made no deeper impression than astonishment because He spoke so confidently; and the parables by the sea-shore were enigmas beyond comprehension since men lacked the heart to understand. So long as there was some tangible, selfish gain in following Jesus, such men would follow; but not one moment longer. The miracle in the country of the Gerasenes (Mark 5: 1-20) shows the general attitude; if the presence of Jesus involves the loss of swine, the swine shall remain and He must go.

The work of John had seemed to lay hold upon the hearts of the people and to produce a thorough reformation, yet it had proved most fleeting and ineffective; was the present work as futile? This was the question that weighed on the mind of Jesus, and,—more than a desire for rest or for an opportunity to sorrow in quiet

over the death of His faithful herald,—led Him to seek with the Twelve “a desert place apart.” A crowd, possibly of pilgrims on the way to the feast of the Passover (John 6:4-5), reached the spot, even before His boat could land, and changed the day from quiet meditation to active teaching and healing. When evening came on, the disciples suggested that He send the people away to find food and lodging for the night. Instead, He used the opportunity to test the quality of His work in a practical way by performing a miracle of a sort the multitude had never seen before. He took five loaves and two fishes, which happened to be at hand, and with them fed every one. This aroused the wildest excitement. Here was the Messiah for whom they had been longing,—a Messiah who could not only heal diseases but even supply food for all. Life would be one long holiday under such a king;—compel Him to take the throne openly and begin His reign (John 6:14-15). It seemed for the moment as if this programme would be carried out and, despite all his teachings concerning the kingdom of God, Jesus would be crowned the king of selfish, sensual men. Sharp work was required to prevent it. He constrained His disciples, who evidently sympathized with the project of the people, to get into their boat and start for the other shore; He sent the multitude away; and then, as His custom was after such an hour of trial, He sought the solitude of the hills for uninterrupted prayer.

A day or two later some of this same crowd came pouring into Capernaum,—which would be on their way to Jerusalem,—searching for Jesus, and not ready to give up the project of a kingdom. Doubtless they were irritated by His previous refusal; and the recep-

tion they now met with was calculated to irritate them still more. Never was Jesus more enigmatical and unresponsive than when they thronged about Him in the synagogue that day. His heart was doubly sad and sore; His great forerunner, John, after a life of futile labor had been foully murdered; and the effect of the miracle of the loaves and fishes had shown that His own patient work in Galilee was equally barren in results. He had succeeded only in gaining a purely selfish following, and had failed to arouse any desire for a spiritual kingdom, and any hunger for the bread of life eternal. Just what Jesus said to the multitude, as they babbled about manna in the wilderness, and demanded fresh exhibitions of His power to gratify their sensuous cravings, we cannot tell. John, after his usual fashion, has thrown the illumination of later knowledge upon the scene, and has told us, not the exact words that Jesus spoke, but the hidden meaning that lay beneath them. To men excited by greedy desire for things purely physical, Jesus undoubtedly proclaimed the supreme importance of things spiritual, contrasting the meat which perisheth with the meat which abideth unto eternal life (John 6:27). Their insistence that He become their king had set before Him one of the temptations in the wilderness; He would give them in return the great truth with which He had met and overcome that temptation (Matt. 4:4). Something of the shadow of the cross, also, would naturally be revealed in His words; for the attitude of these Galileans signified the approach of His death. But much of what John gives us is a sacramental discourse, such as in no way fits this early period when Jesus was silent about His personal claims, and had not begun to teach the necessity of His death.

In the last days of His life He might speak in this manner to the innermost circle of His disciples; and possibly some of these sayings at Capernaum are reproductions of what He said to the Twelve in the upper chamber; but it is hard to believe that He spoke them thus early, and to an ignorant Galilean rabble who had failed to grasp His simplest teachings about the kingdom of God. John tells us nothing about the institution of the Eucharist; but the meaning of it is set forth here. He places it here because he sees that what Jesus strove to accomplish for the Galileans was really a spiritual union with Himself such as would have made the miraculous supper in the wilderness a true sacrament.

Whatever may have been the response that Jesus made to the greedy crowd in Capernaum, it was so baffling and incomprehensible, that they turned away from Him with murmurs of rage. John points to this special time as the beginning of a great desertion; though 6:66-71 is probably the summary of all that followed until Peter's confession (Matt. 16:16). The Synoptists tell of some further ministry, but only of healing (Matt. 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56), and agree that very soon Jesus ended the work in Galilee by withdrawing into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. The suddenness and completeness of this collapse of the Galilean mission can be understood if we realize how the scribes had undermined His favor with the people. The slander that He was in league with the devil had borne its natural fruits. Men had not ceased to throng to Him, eager for miracles, and while in His presence had felt His charm; but they had grown to regard Him as a strange and dangerous man, denounced as the emissary of Beelzebub by those to whom they were



accustomed to look for religious guidance. If there was nothing to be obtained from Him,—if He would not work miracles nor set up a kingdom,—the most prudent thing was to keep away from Him. The discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum seemed an announcement that He had no more favors to bestow. And so they left Him. In reality it was He who abandoned His work for them, because He realized it was a failure.

The dispute of Jesus with the Pharisees about eating with unwashed hands (Mark 7: 1-23) is appropriately given at the close of the Galilean ministry,—though possibly it took place earlier,—because it brings out clearly the underlying cause of the failure of that ministry. The most cherished principle of the Pharisees was that the service of God is a matter of meats and drinks, of forms and ceremonies, of rules laid down by human teachers to govern all outside actions. The principle of Jesus, proclaimed in His teachings and exemplified in His life, was the direct opposite of this. The common people did not at first perceive the contradiction; they could not even imagine that the young prophet from Nazareth would dare to set Himself squarely in opposition not only to their most honored rabbis, but also to what they had been taught were the eternal laws of righteousness. When they finally did awake to the conflict, and were forced to take sides in it, the choice was not difficult. In their own blindness they preferred to follow blind guides; and the call of Jesus to enter the kingdom of God soon ceased to fall upon their ears.

## XI

### THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

**T**HOUGH miracles are found throughout the public life of Jesus, the Galilean ministry is the period in which they are most abundant. Healings and cures of demoniacs seem then to be a part of each day's regular work; there are also several nature miracles, and twice the dead are raised. Accordingly it would seem proper at this point to consider the whole subject of the miracles of Jesus.

#### I. Our Attitude towards Miracles.

An unbiassed study of the miracles of Jesus is impossible. We cannot take them up without a prejudice, a prejudgment, arising from our attitude towards miracles in general. When Renan, for example, states in the preface of his life of Jesus, "Miracles are things that never happen," he evidently has decided in advance to reject all evidence for the miracles of Jesus. And our attitude towards miracles in general is already fixed by the scheme of the universe that we have accepted. If in that scheme there is no personal God, or God has no interest in man, or man does not need any special assistance in the path to divine knowledge and likeness, then all miracles must be denied. In that case, though our denial of the miracles of Jesus be professedly on the ground that the evidence for them is untrustworthy, no amount of evidence

could make them credible to us, because there is no place for miracles in the world of our philosophy and religion. On the other hand, if we accept the Christian scheme of the universe, which recognizes a God who is the creator and controller of the universe, and who with fatherly love seeks to bring all men into closest touch with Himself, and which also recognizes that men because of sin are blinded to His presence and deaf to His call so that they need special help in coming to Him, then miracles are not only possible, but highly probable; and we are ready to give due weight to the evidence which supports them. And if, also, we believe that Jesus was sent by the Father to reveal Him unto men, we take up the subject of His miracles with the conviction that if ever miracles have been wrought, it was by Him in aid of His mission.

A common prejudice against miracles arises from the idea that a miracle is simply a marvel,—the New Testament term is “a wonder,”—and therefore is chiefly a fruit of ignorance. That which the savage would call a miracle is often for the man of science a purely natural event; from which it is inferred that the deeds of Jesus which were marvels to the Galileans, and still remain so to us, were natural events which will one day be understood and lose their power to make men wonder. The inference is not correct because a miracle is more than a marvel. In reality the marvellous is the least important feature in a miracle, and serves simply to call attention to it. The real value of a miracle lies in its significance. In the New Testament we never find the word “wonder” used alone, it is always combined with the word “sign,”—“signs and wonders.”

An exact definition of a miracle is important in any

discussion of miracles; but to agree upon a definition is not easy because, while a miracle is a supernatural event, men differ strongly as to what is meant by a natural event. If we agree to recognize in the operations of nature the regular, customary acts of God, we may define a miracle as an unusual act of God filled with divine meaning. Its unusualness makes it "a wonder"; its divine meaning makes it "a sign." A miracle is not more directly an act of God than any natural event. He is as immediately and fully active in making the sun to rise each morning as He would be in causing it to stand still at the prayer of Joshua. But because a miracle is an unusual act, we cannot place it under any of the "natural laws," which we learn by observing the usual acts of God in nature; and so we call it supernatural. It does, however, find a most evident place under the spiritual laws according to which all of God's acts are performed, and, in this aspect of it, is as natural as any of His more usual acts,

## 2. The Importance of Jesus' Miracles.

The miracles of Jesus have been used from early days in proof of His divinity. The apostles, it is true, seem to have laid no great stress upon any of them except His resurrection, which they used among the Jews to remove the ignominy of the cross, and among the Gentiles to prove that He was indeed the Son of God. Very soon, however, all His miracles were emphasized as the chief and final proof that He was divine. And sceptics, when they had found arguments seeming to disprove them, felt that they had fully settled the question of His divinity in the negative. These arguments are usually rough and ready,—that

the miracles were deliberate frauds on the part of Jesus or lies on the part of His disciples, or that the gospel record is late and worthless.

Today the position of the miracles of Jesus is peculiar. On the one hand, we find it much more difficult to disprove them than it used to be. We realize the moral impossibility of deception on the part of Jesus or His disciples, and we recognize the strength of the evidence for the early date and consequent trustworthiness of the Gospels and most of the other New Testament books. On the other hand, we find it much less easy than formerly to accept any miracles. The age has been given to science, and this has fostered habits of thought averse to the miraculous. To many students miracles are simply a stumbling block instead of a help. "The intelligent believer of our own day," says Adeney, "instead of accepting Christianity upon the ground of the miracles, accepts it in spite of the miracles; whether he accepts the miracles or rejects them, his attitude towards them is towards difficulties, not helps." No sceptic is ever convinced by them. He is always able to answer that though he may not have an explanation of them, he is sure there must be one, and that the inexplicable is not necessarily the miraculous. The foundation of belief in Christ today is not His miracles, but rather His character, His teachings, and His influence upon the world. And in our thought of His life as the Son of God who came to show men the Father, the miracles fall into the background.

In thus giving miracles a subordinate place, we are following the example of Jesus Himself. He never wrought them simply to impress spectators; the temptation to do this was met and mastered in the wilderness.



The nearest approach to an attempt to convert sceptics by a miracle was in the case of the paralytic let down through the roof (Mark 2: 10); but the man undoubtedly would have been healed in response to the faith of his friends who brought him, even if the hostile scribes had not been present; and the miracle did not change the attitude of the hostile scribes. More than once Jesus was asked to show a sign from heaven (e.g., Mark 8: 11), and He always refused. He sought to keep miracles from hindering more important work, sometimes by refusing to meet a crowd that clamored for them (Mark 1: 37), sometimes by enjoining silence concerning them (Mark 5: 43; Matt. 9: 30). He warned the Twelve against overvaluing the power to perform them (Luke 10: 20). And His final beatitude was upon the faith that needs no miracle to create it (John 20: 29). If we cling so closely to the miracles that we refuse to believe in Him without them, we cannot claim that beatitude.

### 3. Why should Jesus work Miracles?

A useless miracle is a thing incredible. Though we may be fully convinced that Jesus had the power to work miracles, yet we properly refuse to believe that He used the power, unless we see some reason for His so doing. Can we discover a real need met by His miracles? They have been likened to a church bell calling an audience. Undoubtedly they served that purpose, but only incidentally; He never performed a miracle simply to draw a crowd, and sometimes He fled from the crowd collected by a miracle. They have also been likened to a seal, affixed to His teachings to prove them divine. In a sense they are such: Nicodemus was right when he said, " Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher

come from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest except God be with him" (John 3:2). Still we notice that the miracle never is a mere marvel added to the teaching to confirm it, nor is the confirmation its chief purpose.

Christ's work was one harmonious whole, of which the miracles were a part, though by no means the most important part. When He appeals to them as evidence, it is just as He appeals to the rest of His work; e.g., the Baptist may know that Jesus is the Messiah because "the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them" (Matt. 11:5). (Note what an anti-climax that statement would be if the Messiahship was revealed more clearly by the miracles than by the preaching.) As Bruce says, the miracles "were all useful, morally significant, beneficent works, rising naturally out of His vocation as Saviour, performed in the course of His ministry in the pursuit of His high calling." There were two reasons why, in accomplishing His mission, He should work miracles:

1). To help men to receive Him as the Messiah.

The Jews expected that the Messiah when he came would work miracles. This is shown in the Gospels by the repeated demand for a sign (Matt. 12:38; Mark 15:32; John 2:18), and also by Jesus' own story of the temptation in the wilderness, which is meaningless unless He recognized that in His Messianic work miracles would be asked, and He had power to grant them. Since this was the expectation, how could men believe on Him if He refused to work miracles? There was so much in His life and teachings totally at variance with their preconceptions of the Messiah and his kingdom, that if they were disappointed likewise in this matter, it is hard to see how He could have won any

faith and following. "We may well doubt whether, without miracles, the belief would ever have grown up that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, in view of the striking absence of those attributes and functions which the Jews expected in their Messiah" (Sanday). Nevertheless we must also recognize that miracles did not produce as profound an impression upon the beholders as we might suppose. The age was credulous and unable to distinguish between miracles and marvels. There were many professed and professional miracle-workers (Matt. 12:27). Also, lying miracles wrought by Satan were thought possible. A Messiah who did not work miracles would not be accepted; but a person who did work miracles would not necessarily be thought the Messiah.

This use of miracles was a concession to the Messianic expectation of the people,—a gracious adaptation of the work of Jesus to their special need. Without the need, there might not have been the miracles. Therefore, if He were here today, we cannot affirm that He would work miracles. "The miracles wrought by Jesus were designed for, and fitted to convince, those only for whose benefit they were wrought,—to facilitate the planting of Christianity among them. There is no evidence that they were designed to carry conviction either to Jews or Gentiles eighteen hundred years after their occurrence" (Robinson).

2). To make more clear to men the nature of the Kingdom.

We have seen how erroneous were the ideas of the Jews on this subject, and how constantly Jesus had to teach that the Kingdom is not political but religious, its life not carnal but spiritual, and its central power not selfishness but love, with a king ruling over it as serv-

ant of all. He taught this by deed as well as by word. His miracles, equally with His words, were teachings of sympathy, love, divine providence, the forgiveness of sins, and the like. We study them and interpret them as such today; and in the Gospel of John we often find that a miracle is the text of a sermon, e.g., the opening of the eyes of the blind is the introduction to the discourse on "I am the Light of the world." Such teaching by miracles was again a part of Christ's condescension to human needs. His words alone ought to have been sufficient statement of the truth; but because of the dullness and immaturity of His hearers, He had to use these object lessons.

It is this perfect harmony of the miracles with Jesus' life and words that sets them in strong contrast to the reputed miracles of heathen religions or of mediaeval saints. The latter are usually pure marvels,—meaningless, bizarre, grotesque, puerile and sometimes shocking. Of like sort are the miracles invented for Jesus in the apocryphal gospels; they show what human imagination would produce in the early Christian centuries, and thus they serve as an undesigned proof that the gospel miracles are not the fruit of imagination. We may affirm it incredible that the miracles of Jesus could have been invented by any evangelist, still less by popular imagination. "That popular imagination which gives birth to rumors and then believes them, is not generally capable of great or sublime or well-sustained efforts. '*Wunderthatige sind meist nur schlechte Gemalde*'" (Seeley).

The purpose of the miracles explains the limitation under which they were wrought. Their indispensable prerequisite was faith on the part of those who desired them (Mark 5:34, 36; 9:23; 10:52); without faith

the miracle could not take place (Mark 6: 5 f.). This faith was not simply a belief that Jesus could work miracles; it was also a recognition that God was working through Him (Matt. 9: 8; Mark 5: 19). Evidently such faith would be strengthened by the miracle, and its possessor would be made to recognize more clearly the presence of the kingdom of God (Matt. 12: 28); whereas the man who looked upon Jesus as a professional thaumaturgist or as an emissary of Beelzebub would receive no spiritual help from the boon of a miracle, and, therefore, could not be granted it. The presence of such faith drew forth a miracle sometimes almost in contradiction to Jesus' desire (Mark 1: 40 f.; 7: 24 f.), or seemingly without His direct volition (Mark 5: 25 f.). The destruction of faith through the increasing slanders and charges of the Pharisees that Jesus was a Samaritan and a demoniac caused the decrease in miracles in His later ministries. There was no use of working them because they would not be of spiritual profit.

#### 4. Classes of Miracles.

We are inclined to divide the miracles of Jesus into classes, and distinguish degrees of the supernatural in them. To us, as to the original beholders, it seems a greater miracle, requiring more divine power, to raise the dead than to heal the sick, or to still a tempest than to calm a demoniac. But there is no indication that Jesus felt any such difference, or made any distinction among His miracles. He used exactly the same act to raise Peter's wife's mother from a bed of illness and Jairus' daughter from a bed of death; the one miracle was apparently no easier than the other. Indeed, He seemed to make no distinction between what we call



the natural and the supernatural. A miracle was as simple and matter-of-course to Him as an ordinary act. He blessed and broke the bread for the five thousand near Bethsaida in the same manner as for the two disciples at Emmaus. Often in His acts He blended the natural and the supernatural in a way that does not fit with our idea of their sharp distinction. He multiplied the loaves and fishes till the multitude were filled, and then He had the fragments collected and saved for future food; He gave life itself to the daughter of Jairus, but He commanded her parents to give her something to eat.

The miracles of Jesus are usually grouped in four classes, viz.:

1). Acts of healing, which are by far the most numerous;

2). Casting out demons, of which five or six instances are described and a much greater number is indicated;

3). Raising the dead, viz.: the widow's son, Jairus' daughter, and Lazarus; and

4). Nature miracles,—such as turning water into wine and stilling the tempest,—of which there are nine, if all the accounts are accepted.

Concerning these we notice that each of the Gospels contains instances of all four classes except that John has no cure of demoniacs, though it states that the Jews charged Jesus with having a demon (7:20; 8:48; 10:20); also, that though the evidence is not equally strong for each separate miracle, it is for each class of miracles, e.g., there is just as good evidence that Jesus performed nature miracles and raised the dead as that He healed the sick and cast out demons. One thing more should be borne in mind,—mere reduction

of the number of miracles is not an aid to faith; if we believe that Jesus worked one miracle, it is easy to believe that He worked many, provided there was need of them.

### 5. Sceptical Explanation of the Miracles.

Those who deny the miracles of Jesus must, of course, find some satisfactory explanation of their presence in the gospel story. The easiest explanation is that the miracles are a later addition to the story made innocently enough by ignorant and enthusiastic Christians. Some are simply legends, such as cluster around the memory of any famous man; others are myths, arising from the natural supposition that every miracle recorded in the Old Testament was a foreshadowing of similar but far more wonderful miracles by the Messiah; others still are misunderstandings of the original story, e.g., parables or symbolic statements understood to be literal history. Such an explanation involves a late date for all our four Gospels, since Mark, which is generally considered to be the very earliest, is replete with miracles, and the even earlier document, Q, though occupied with the teachings of Jesus, seems to have contained one remarkable miracle,—the healing of the centurion's servant from a distance. But most scholars today would put the date of the Gospels within the lifetime of some of the Twelve and of others who knew Jesus personally; and it is not easy to suppose that these witnesses would endorse such a decided transformation of the actual history which they had witnessed. Also, we notice that in the Fourth Gospel, which unquestionably was written some years after the other three, the miracles are less numerous and no more remarkable than in Mark, which would

indicate that the stories did not grow with lapse of time. Moreover, as we have already pointed out, the character of the miracles by no means agrees with the character of those which later fancy would invent, if we are to judge from the absurd miracles related in the apocryphal gospels, the earliest of which were written in the second century.

If an early date for the Gospels is accepted, there still remain rationalistic ways of explaining the miracles. The healing of the sick, like a host of modern cures, was by the influence of mind upon body when stimulated by expectancy and suggestion; the remarkable personality of Jesus and the great excitement caused by His coming account for the greatness of these cures—though some of them are doubtless exaggerated. The same explanation is given for the casting out of demons, if the so-called demoniacs are held to be simply persons of disordered intellect or sufferers from epilepsy and similar diseases. The raising of the widow's son and the daughter of Jairus were cases of resuscitation; so probably was the raising of Lazarus, though that presents special difficulties and is of doubtful authenticity. The nature miracles are the hardest to explain; in some instances they may have been natural events happening so opportunely as to produce the impression of special divine action,—the so-called miracles of providence; in other instances they were misunderstood parables or else gross exaggerations.

The rationalistic ways in which a miracle may be explained were indicated in the discussion of the miracle at the wedding feast in Cana; but they may be further illustrated in the miracle of feeding the five thousand. The evidence for this miracle is strong,

since it is told at length by all four evangelists, and is inseparably connected with the crisis of the Galilean ministry; yet it is a nature miracle, most difficult to account for in rationalistic ways. The chief explanations are as follows:

An exaggeration of some simple incident of which the exact facts are now lost (Holtzmann);

Christ's example in distributing the little food He had shamed the rest into doing the same; the result was a common meal to which all contributed; and even if it was scanty, the good feeling made it most satisfying (Keim, Menzies);

A misunderstood statement about the spiritual food with which Jesus fed the multitude, or about the satisfaction of soul which came from being with Him (Renan, Gilbert);

An historical fact except the closing statement, "they were all filled";—Jesus distributed the food as a sacramental meal, and each took a minute portion (Schweitzer).

Evidently the only point upon which these writers are agreed is that the feeding of the five thousand was not a miracle; and we cannot help feeling that this agreement was reached in advance, and arose from their attitude towards all miracles.

Concerning rationalistic explanations in general, it is enough to say that they are always ingenious and are often plausible. It does seem that much of the ministry of healing by Jesus and the apostles may properly be placed under psychological laws which we are beginning to formulate. And certain other incidents which we have always considered miraculous may presently be given a satisfactory natural explanation. With a theistic conception of the universe the

line between the natural and the supernatural is much harder to draw than in the days of deism. But the attitude of mind that makes it possible to see God in ordinary events as well as in extraordinary is an attitude that enables one to see most clearly the revelation of God in the acts as well as in the words of Christ, and therefore grasps their value as signs even if they should some day cease to be marvels.

## 6. **Demoniacal Possessions.**

Besides the usual problems connected with all miracles, the cure of demoniacs presents a special difficulty which demands discussion. On the one hand, a belief in demons and demoniacs, like a belief in witches, is characteristic of a low stage of intellectual and religious development,—a survival of animism,—and disappears with the development of knowledge and religion; on the other hand, Jesus and the apostles, whom we take as our highest teachers, seem to endorse the belief both by word and deed. Without this endorsement, belief in demons would be treated exactly like belief in witches; but with it we cannot reject demoniacal possession without facing a difficult dilemma, viz.: either Jesus was ignorant and supposed that demons exist and possess men, or else He was deceitful and pretended they do.

In Palestine in the first century belief in demoniacal possession was general, and exorcists were numerous. Josephus has an interesting account of seeing a Jewish exorcist cast out a demon in the presence of Vespasian and the Roman army (*Ant.* 8:2:5). Jesus speaks of such exorcists, though it is doubtful whether He admits that they really did cast out demons (*Matt.* 12:27; cf. *Acts* 19:13 f.). Therefore, in studying the



gospel narrative we must recognize that its accounts of cures of demoniacs are possibly influenced by the prevailing ideas, e.g., the man of Matt. 12:22 is said to have been possessed with a demon, but this may have been simply the inference of the spectators from the fact that he was blind and dumb. But with all allowance it is evident:

a). That possession was regarded as distinct from disease; though physical infirmities,—deafness, dumbness, epilepsy,—were sometimes associated with it. The work of casting out demons is carefully distinguished from the work of healing (Mark 1:34, Luke 9:1).

b). That Jesus spoke and acted as if demons possessed certain sufferers and could be cast out by Him. At the same time, we notice that He relied upon none of the usual methods of exorcism (magic formulæ, roots, etc.), but used direct command, and said He cast out demons “by the finger of God,” or “the spirit of God” (Luke 11:20; Matt. 12:28). For His disciples to do the same, faith was necessary and prayer (Matt. 17:19-20; Mark 9:29).

c). That there is no indication of a necessary connection between sin and possession; the demonized do not seem to have been more wicked than other men. We have two instances of persons who were possessed in early childhood (Mark 7:30; 9:21).

Modern thought is strongly inclined to explain demoniacal possession as simply various forms of physical and mental disease. In certain cases the belief that the man was possessed seems to have arisen simply from the presence of some physical disease,—dumbness, deafness, epilepsy, which was supposed to be caused by demons; in other cases the phenomena seem

to have been those of insanity, usually with double consciousness. The recognition of Jesus as the Messiah by some of the demonized (Mark 1:24, 34; 5:7) is not remarkable; a person of disordered intellect might be specially sensitive to the general Messianic expectation which pervaded Jesus' audiences, and would have no hesitation in proclaiming the strong impression Jesus made upon him.

With this explanation of demoniacal possession how shall we account for the seeming belief in it on the part of Jesus? If we say that He shared the erroneous ideas of His age about demons, we seem to lessen His qualifications as a spiritual teacher. To share the ideas of His age about science (e.g., as to the motions of the earth and sun) or about history (e.g., as to the authorship of Deuteronomy) would not hinder Him from having in His own realm of spiritual truth the authority that comes from full knowledge. But this question of demons and their influence upon men belongs quite as much to the realm of religion as to that of science. And if we cannot accept the belief of Jesus concerning demons, can we accept it concerning the whole unseen world of personal forces good or evil? On the other hand, we may say that the treatment of demoniacs by Jesus was simply an accommodation to popular thought. He did not believe in the existence of demons, but acted as if He did, in order to gain the confidence and co-operation of the sufferers and their friends, and thus produce the cures. But why should He confirm His disciples in such an erroneous belief, e.g., by His private endorsement of it (Mark 9:28-9)? Can such conduct be made to square with perfect truthfulness? We may possibly excuse a physician for deceiving a sick man or a lunatic, on the ground that

for persons in their condition the truth is not really true; but how about the physician who extends His deception further, or endorses popular ideas when he knows them to be false?

Such difficulties in accepting the theory that demoniacal possession is nothing but disease have led other students to maintain the correctness of the old opinion that there really are demons and that Jesus did cast them out. It is pointed out that gross exaggerations of a doctrine do not justify rejection of it totally. A natural reaction from the absurd development of the doctrine of angels and devils in the Middle Ages has made us unduly inclined to question all belief in spiritual beings. Much that was once thought to be demoniacal is today recognized to be purely human. Yet, on the other hand, the student of human consciousness is more ready than he was a few decades ago to admit the possibility of influence by other than human wills. "No one except a materialist believes that this world contains all the forms of conscious beings that exist. There may be many kinds and grades of consciousness above, as there are in our world many below, the human. Nor would it be quite 'modern' to hold dogmatically that the human consciousness is shut off from contact with all forms of consciousness except those that are alive at any one time upon this earth" (Douglas Mackenzie). The belief in demons may be held by the ignorant in absurd forms; but it is not in itself an absurdity. That in the universe there should be other spiritual beings besides God and men seems altogether probable; and the existence of evil spirits is just as logical as the existence of good spirits. And if evil spirits exist, their influence upon the human consciousness under certain

conditions and circumstances may be possible and no more mysterious than the influence of one human spirit upon another. What those conditions and circumstances are has never been determined. Demoniactal possession, in forms very similar to those described in the New Testament, is recognized in Korea, China and other mission-lands today, and is regarded by many observers to be wholly distinct from insanity. A careful study of its phenomena, such as was initiated by Nevius, ought to throw much light upon the subject.

### 7. The Gospel Story without Miracles.

While faith in miracles may not be necessary for belief in Jesus as the divine Saviour of the world, we certainly cannot reject from the gospel story the incidents which to the beholders seemed miraculous, and which are still beyond our ability to explain, without rejecting practically the whole of the story and confessing that we know very little about Jesus. This is so for several reasons:

a). Much of the gospel narrative is a record of miracles. The gospel of Mark in particular, which is one underlying document of Matthew and Luke, is largely made up of them. Take away the miracles, and there are great gaps in the narrative.

b). The history of Jesus at its most important points becomes unintelligible, if certain miracles which shaped it are eliminated. E.g., What caused the crisis in the Galilean ministry, if there was no feeding of the five thousand? What happened at Bethany to alarm the Sadducees and make them join with the Pharisees in the decision that Jesus must be put to death, if Lazarus was not raised? Even Renan feels that something like a miracle must have taken place;—

“some motive proceeding from Bethany helped to hasten the death of Jesus”; either some saying of Jesus to the sisters was distorted into a report of the resurrection of Lazarus, or else there was a fraudulent miracle. What took place at Jericho to arouse the popular Messianic enthusiasm that led to the triumphal entry? Even Keim is disposed to believe that in some way,—the blind men at Jericho were actually made to see,—“at any rate this healing is by far the best attested among the accounts of the blind in the Gospels.” Above all, what happened to revive the faith of the disciples after it had been destroyed by the crucifixion of Jesus? Every critic, though he may deny the resurrection, admits that the church at the outset believed in it, since otherwise the existence of the church at all is inexplicable.

c). Teachings of Jesus that bear on their face the stamp of genuineness are often inseparable from miracles. E.g., His remarkable utterances about the Sabbath day (Mark 3:4) are hard to account for unless a special divine work of mercy on that day had called forth the censure of the Pharisees and His own defence; His message strengthening the faith of the imprisoned Baptist is a reference to His mighty works as well as to His preaching; the discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum needs for its explanation the miracle of the loaves and fishes: the account of the Temptation, which must have come from Jesus’ own lips, presupposes the power to work miracles.

“On the whole,” says Gore, “miracles play so important a part in Christ’s scheme that any theory which would represent them as due entirely to the imagination of His followers or of a later age destroys the credibility of the documents not partially



but wholly, and leaves Christ a personage as mythical as Hercules." Dr. Gore's statement ends with an exaggeration. Even without the Gospels Jesus would be more than a mythical personage; the Christian church, the Lord's Supper, and the Lord's day bear witness to His historic existence. But without the Gospels the story of His life and work would have to be reconstructed almost wholly by imagination; and, indeed, this is the way in which rationalistic writers often do reconstruct it.

## XII

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD

**I**N the Galilean ministry Jesus was mainly occupied in preaching the kingdom of God. What is that kingdom? When is it established? What is the precise relation of Jesus to it? These are questions for every student of the teachings of Jesus. Indeed, as Harnack points out, all the teachings of Jesus could be grouped under one head,—the kingdom of God and its coming. Our present subject is the life of Jesus; and, though His words illuminate His life even as His life illuminates His words, we cannot enter upon a detailed study of His teachings. Nevertheless, if His ministry was concerned with the kingdom of God, we must gain some light upon His idea of that kingdom in order to understand His ministry. The study is forced upon us to a special degree in the present day because scholars differ sharply as to whether Jesus believed the kingdom to be already present or to come in the future, and whether He conceived of it as ethical or apocalyptic in character, and even whether He deemed Himself to be the Messiah or only a special forerunner. Evidently our whole conception of Him and His work will be shaped by our answer to these problems; and evidently also, if earnest students differ thus widely, the subject is not free from obscurities.

#### I. Presuppositions.

For an understanding of the words of Jesus about

the kingdom of God it is important to bear in mind the following facts:

a). He had to express His thought in forms adapted to the minds of His hearers. The very use of the term "the kingdom of God" or "the kingdom of heaven" (the Jewish form which Matthew prefers) is an instance of such adaptation. It may not have been the most fitting term for what Jesus had in mind. John, in his reproduction of the thought of Jesus, uses as its equivalent "eternal life," which seemed to him more truly expressive of Jesus' meaning. But "the kingdom of God" would arouse the attention and interest of the Jews because it was their favorite term for the supreme manifestation of Jehovah's love for them,—the consummation of all their desires. "That prayer," says the Talmud, "in which there is no mention of the kingdom of God, is not a prayer." No other term could so closely link the work of Jesus to the history and the hopes of His nation.

b). Such adaptation had its inevitable danger. Since His hearers already had in mind definite and cherished conceptions of the kingdom, they were likely to interpret His words according to their own ideas, and thus to misunderstand Him. This is true even of the inner circle of disciples; and there is ever the possibility that, through such misunderstanding, their report of some of His enigmatic sayings may not be correct. "We must keep clearly before us the difference between what He meant and what His reporters thought He meant" (Worsley).

c). The Old Testament doctrine of the kingdom of God throws light upon the thought of Jesus. His attitude towards the teachings of the Old Testament is expressed in His statement, "I came not to destroy but

to fulfill" (Matt. 5: 17). Concerning His revelation of the mysteries of the kingdom He said to His disciples, "Verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not" (Matt. 13: 17). The conceptions of the kingdom set forth in the Old Testament vary greatly in degrees of spirituality; but we may be sure that the most spiritual were those which Jesus endorsed, and that none was higher, or more comprehensive, than His own.

d). If Jesus did establish the kingdom of God, then that kingdom is in our midst today, and is a realization, more or less perfect, of the thought of Jesus; it is the plant that has grown from the seed He sowed. To deny this is to affirm either that Jesus did not understand His mission or that He wholly failed in it. Nineteen centuries of Christianity have made evident concerning the kingdom many things which the first disciples saw dimly or not at all; and the knowledge thus gained can be used in the interpretation of Jesus' words about it.

## 2. The Kingdom in the Thought of the Jews.

The term, "the kingdom of God," may have taken its rise from the Book of Daniel (e.g., 2: 44, 7: 27); but the idea it embodies goes back to the very beginning of Hebrew history. Josephus expressed that idea exactly,—and coined a most useful word in doing so,—when he said that the form of government which Moses gave his nation was a theocracy. Israel was not the only Semitic tribe recognizing its god as king, and calling him by that name; but no other people based its whole national life so completely upon the sovereignty

of its deity. The early history of the Jews, whether we treat it as fact or legend, and their later annals constantly set forth a covenant relation between Jehovah as king and themselves as His people; their lawgivers and their prophets devote themselves to developing and emphasizing this relation. When there is an earthly king, he is considered to be the visible representative of God,—the vice-gerent of the Most High; when the throne of David is vacant, and the yoke of foreign monarchs is heavy, the national life is kept from perishing by a confident expectation that God in some way will soon deliver His people, and resume His reign over them.

The century of Jewish history preceding the time of Jesus had been one of restlessness, disorder and misery. Even the rule of the Romans had brought only partial tranquillity, and had by no means dispelled discontent and heavy-heartedness. The kingdom of God was in abeyance,—that was evident; because of their sins Jehovah was now punishing the people by allowing the heathen to rule over them. When He should be pleased to resume His reign, would the Romans be driven out by natural means or by supernatural? Who then would occupy the throne,—a descendant of David, or a Messiah coming in the clouds from heaven, or Jehovah Himself through the media of priest and prophet? The kingdom was for Israel; but did this mean that every son of Abraham would enjoy it, or only those who had faithfully kept the covenant and obeyed the laws of Moses? Eventually the kingdom would extend to the ends of the earth; but how about the heathen,—would they be destroyed, or would they be converted to Judaism, or would they remain a subject race, slaving for Israel as



Israel had once slaved for them? The kingdom would be in every way ideal; but would its chief features be political or social or spiritual? Such questions must have been discussed constantly, not only by learned rabbis in schools and synagogues but by the common people in homes and market-places; for they were of vital interest to all. And the answers must have been uncertain and conflicting, since prophecies and apocalypses in their revelation of the future gave widely varying pictures, which appealed in different degrees to different minds.

We have little means of ascertaining what views of the kingdom were most popular, except from the gospel narrative; and that may give us a wrong impression because it records most often the opinions of men who opposed Jesus. Unquestionably these men, whether they thought of the kingdom as political or eschatological, had little desire for the spiritual blessings which the great prophets set forth as the chief joys of the kingdom, and because of their selfish, worldly and dogmatic frame of mind were unable to appreciate the teachings of Jesus. But leaders like Joseph of Arimathaea, "who was looking for the kingdom of God" (Mark 15:43), and the rich young ruler whom Jesus loved (Mark 10:21), must have had much nobler ideals; and doubtless there were many whose thoughts were fashioned by the highest teachings of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the impression we gain from the way in which the teachings of John the Baptist and of Jesus were received is that in general the conception of the kingdom was a low one. The reign of the Maccabees, which began with real consecration, had ended in selfish struggles for purely political power; and there had been nothing in subsequent days to

revive and purify the idea of a truly divine rule. The situation seems to have been what James Orr well sums up, when he says, "The one fact which stands out clear is that in the time of our Lord neither Pharisee, nor Sadducee, nor Essene had any hold of a conception of the kingdom which answered the deep, spiritual, vital import of the idea in the Old Testament. The few who cherished more worthy views were to be sought for in the private circles of the pious who talked of these things (Mal. 3: 16) and 'looked for redemption in Jerusalem' (Luke 2: 25, 38). The idea of the kingdom of God in its spiritual meaning had to be recovered, or more properly discovered, in a worldly, legalistic, Sadducean age."

### 3. The Kingdom in the Thought of Jesus.

When Jesus was asked by Pilate, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" He answered, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18: 36), by which He meant, as Pilate clearly understood, that the kingdom of God is not a political one. All His acts and His teachings bear witness to this; He forbade his disciples to seek the authority that Gentile kings exercised (Mark 10: 42 f.), and He warned them against the leaven of Herod (Mark 8: 15), which is thirst for worldly power. Moreover, as Gilbert notes, throughout His entire ministry He never dropped a word of contempt or hatred or even disrespect for the foreign power which was oppressing the Jews; and He seems to have regarded their agents, the publicans, as pursuing a perfectly legitimate occupation. A political kingdom, like that which the Maccabees established and which many Jews were longing to have established again, would bring no spiritual blessings, but rather the reverse;

Jesus realized this at the outset, when He rejected the mountain temptation of the wilderness. The words to Pilate, however, did not mean that the kingdom has no place on earth and is a purely heavenly realm; whether it is in the future or already present,—a question to be considered later,—it is for men who live under earthly conditions with human needs and temptations (Matt. 6: 33, 13: 41), a kingdom in this world, though not of this world.

The kingdom of God is the kingdom over which God rules,—the kingdom in which the will of God is the law of all life; more briefly, it is the rule or reign of God. To the petition, "Thy kingdom come" (Luke 11: 2), there is added in Matthew, as its equivalent, "thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth" (Matt. 6: 10). All Jews would accept this definition of the kingdom; but the popular thought of what it involves would not be the same as the thought of Jesus, because the popular idea of God was not the same as His. To most Jews God was the absolute monarch, a mighty Oriental despot; to Jesus He was the Father in heaven. Only once (Matt. 5: 35), and then for an obvious reason, does He call Him King, though the name would naturally be used when teaching about the kingdom. Now, the reign of a despot, however wise and just and kind, is not the reign of a father. A father's subjects are his children, and the purpose of his rule, if he is an ideal father, is to make his children one in character and aspiration with himself. This is the key to Jesus' teachings about the kingdom of God. The topic is so comprehensive, He dealt with it from so many stand-points, and He taught in such an occasional, unsystematic way, that His meaning is not always evident; but we shall not go far astray in interpreting all His

words, if we bear in mind that the kingdom of God is first and always the kingdom of the Father.

The subjects of the kingdom are all who with filial spirit do the will of God. Evidently no barriers of race or earthly condition shut in the kingdom; it is open to all men. But an unfilial, selfish heart is a barrier; and because men are by nature selfish, the invitation to enter the kingdom begins with a call to repentance (Mark 1:15), and the transformation required is likened to becoming as a little child (Mark 10:15) or being born anew (John 3:3). The character of those who belong to the kingdom is set forth in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-9). God always is the Father, but men must become His sons by a change in their attitude towards Him and towards one another (Matt. 5:44, Luke 15:24). For Jesus no such transformation was necessary because His spirit was ever filial, and He did always the things that were pleasing to the Father (John 8:29). With the consciousness of abiding in such perfect relations He could invite others to follow Him (Luke 9:58) and learn of Him (Matt. 11:29). And yet no profession of love and loyalty to Him, and no outward imitation of His life, could win admission to the kingdom (Matt. 7:21): the doing of the will of His Father was the sole condition; and whoever did that will He recognized as His brother and sister and mother (Mark 3:35).

The life in the kingdom is one of love and service. It is the divine life; for God, because He is a Father, is the Great Servant of all His children,—of the evil and the good, the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45); and those who serve in love are the sons of God (Luke 6:35). It is the life that Jesus led (Luke 22:27) and set before His disciples as a pattern (John 13:15; 15:

12). It is the only true life of man; so that he who fails to gain it, no matter how full his earthly existence, has really lost his life (Mark 8: 35 f.); in other words, it is the "eternal life," which in the Fourth Gospel seems to be the equivalent term for the kingdom of God. The motive power or law of life in the kingdom is love (Mark 12: 29 f.); and by its operation there is carried forward to completeness the will of God revealed by the law and the prophets (Matt. 5: 17 f.). The highest places in the kingdom belong to those who serve most,—a complete reversal of selfish gradation of dignities,—and cannot be arbitrarily bestowed (Mark 10: 35 f.). Unequal opportunities for service will not affect the measure of reward,—so the parable of the talents teaches (Matt. 25: 14 f.); but unequal use of the same opportunities results in correspondingly unequal degrees of divine commendation,—such is the lesson of the parable of the pounds (Luke 19: 12 f.). All service brings reward; and yet, as in the case of a father dealing with his children, the reward must be reckoned, not as wages, but as a gracious gift,—this is the truth added by the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matt. 20: 1-16). The kingdom of God belongs to those who render to God its fruits; in other words, live the life of love and service; and for this reason Jesus predicts that it will be taken away from the Jews and given to another nation (Matt. 21: 43).

The blessings of the kingdom are spiritual, bestowed by a God who is spirit. And the supremest blessing, the *summum bonum*, is not the things of the kingdom but the kingdom itself. The kingdom of God is the hidden treasure or the pearl of great price, which one gladly purchases at the cost of all other possessions



(Matt. 13: 44-45); and it is the gift which the Father's good pleasure bestows (Luke 12: 32). This, again, results from the fact that the kingdom is a Father's kingdom; the thought is like that which we try to express when we say the supreme blessing of a home is not the things of the home but the home itself. The popular Jewish conception was exactly the opposite; the blessings of the kingdom were material,—freedom, power, riches, health and the like, and the kingdom itself was valued simply as the means for obtaining these. Concerning material blessings, we notice that Jesus never promised His disciples exemption from the hardships He Himself was experiencing; and they saw that His lot was one of privation, persecution and finally of the utmost suffering. Yet, on the other hand, He did not regard earthly comforts as incompatible with membership in the kingdom (Matt. 6: 33, Mark 10: 29 f.); there was no emphasis of asceticism in His teachings. Earthly treasures are not condemned but they are trivial and transient (Matt 6: 19 f.), and are not the true riches (Luke 12: 21; 16: 11). Since the blessings of the kingdom are those of the heavenly life, and the highest blessing is the consciousness of the presence and love of the Father, it is sometimes hard to tell whether Jesus is speaking of the kingdom or of heaven. We are not sure that He made a sharp distinction,—there was no great reason why He should; for, unlike His hearers, He believed that “it was possible for the godly to have, not only a sure hope of future blessedness, but also an abundant experience of blessedness in this life” (Wendt).

#### 4. The Time of the Kingdom.

In the thought of Jesus was the kingdom of God

a matter of the present or of the future? The answer is not obvious because the statements of Jesus seem conflicting. Much that He says about the kingdom is in the present tense. It is already within (or in the midst of) those to whom He is speaking (Luke 17:21); His casting out demons by the spirit of God is a proof of its presence (Matt. 12:28); from the days of John the Baptist until now men of violence take it by storm (Matt. 11:12); the scribes and Pharisees neither enter it themselves nor suffer those who are entering in (Matt. 23:13); the rich man finds difficulty in entering it (Mark 12:34); publicans and harlots go into it before the chief priests and elders (Matt. 21:31); and whoever humbles himself as a little child, the same is the greater in it (Matt. 18:4). On the other hand, there are passages that place its coming in the near future:—before the death of some who stand by (Mark 9:1); or before another Passover (if this is the meaning of Mark 14:25). And still other passages place it in the remote future: e.g., the parable of the pounds, which is told to those who suppose the kingdom of God is immediately to appear, speaks of “a far country” to which the nobleman must go to receive his kingdom and afterward return (Luke 19:11 f.), and the parable of the talents puts the hour of reckoning “after a long time” (Matt. 25:19). Especially striking are several passages about a future coming of the Son of Man, apparently to usher in the kingdom in true apocalyptic fashion.

Undoubtedly the men to whom Jesus spoke looked for a future kingdom. There was nothing in their present circumstances to suggest that it was already here; indeed, they despaired of the present, and possibly found a miserable pleasure in magnifying its

woes because they supposed the increase of oppression made the coming of Jehovah in judgment and the inauguration of His kingdom more certain and near. While Jesus, of course, did not sympathize with those who dreamed of a future political kingdom, some scholars hold that He shared the current ideas about a future, eschatological kingdom, and considered His present work to be simply preparatory,—like that of John the Baptist. In this case the rules He laid down for the present life of His disciples were intended only for the interval until the kingdom should come. As John had preached repentance and a life of righteousness, so Jesus with keener spiritual insight preached repentance and a life of loving service; both believed that the end of the present age and the coming of the eschatological kingdom would be brought about, if men would live a life acceptable to God. According to these scholars, all that we have thus far set forth as Jesus' teachings about the kingdom of God belongs properly to the stage before the coming of the kingdom, and differs from the popular teaching mainly in that it calls upon men to prepare for the kingdom by an ethical, spiritual life rather than by an absorbing devotion to the law.

Whether Jesus did accept and teach the coming of the kingdom in its eschatological form, is a question to be discussed in a later chapter. But, even if He did, it seems certain that He called the preliminary stage, also, the kingdom of God. This would not be remarkable; the term is so elastic that it could contain both significations; indeed, its wealth of contents is what makes a complete definition of it so difficult. Since the eschatological kingdom has no ethics, for in it "temptation and sin no longer exist" (Schweitzer),

we may distinguish the kingdom we have been describing by calling it the ethical kingdom of God. Now, when we consider the teachings of Jesus that are evidently about this ethical kingdom, we find He seems to declare sometimes that it is present, and sometimes that it is still in the future. His disciples are assured that the kingdom of God is already in their midst or within them, and yet they are taught to pray that it may come. The seemingly contradictory statements of time still remain, even if we ignore the eschatological kingdom.

Possibly the simplest solution of the problem of the time of the ethical kingdom is suggested in the parables, where three periods are clearly distinguished,—inception, development, consummation. In one parable these are called the blade, the ear and the full corn in the ear (Mark 4:26-29); in another they are seed-sowing, growth and the harvest (Matt. 13:24-30); in still another they are the casting of a seine-net, the drawing of it, and the sorting of the fish (Matt. 13:47-50). If the kingdom of God is the rule of a loving Father's will, then it began at the time when Jesus revealed the Father, and men were drawn to recognize and obey that rule. Jesus Himself, we might say, was the first and, for a season, the only member of that kingdom; but soon it increased, as disciples joined themselves to Him and sought to bring their lives into harmony with His teachings. Still this was only a period of feeble beginnings,—scarcely more than preparation. The full gospel of the kingdom could not be proclaimed, because it was not yet prepared. The cross, which is the mightiest revelation of the heart of the Father and, therefore, the great door into the kingdom, was still in the future. With

yearning Jesus looked forward to the hour when that mystery of redemption should be evident to His little flock, and cheered them with the promise that in their own lifetime they should "see the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). The promise was fulfilled at the time of the resurrection and Pentecost. The kingdom of God then came with the power of the cross and of the Holy Spirit; and it has remained in our midst with an increasing revelation of the Father's loving will, and a wealth of opportunities for loyal service. The seed-time and tender blade are far behind, and the ears are growing on the stalks; the treasures of God have been entrusted to His servants and are increasing under faithful stewardship; it is the period of development. But still far before us is the day when the message and the work of Jesus have borne their full fruits, and the harvest is garnered, and, in the fullest sense of the word, the kingdom has come. In that day, when God's will is done as in heaven so on earth, the kingdom of God will truly be equivalent to heaven.

### 5. The Kingdom and the Church.

The kingdom of God, as we have thus far studied it, is the rule or reign of God in the hearts of those who love Him. But certain teachings of Jesus present it as a visible, outward realm, whose increase in size can be measured, and whose subjects are not all true sons of God. The parable of the mustard herb (Matt. 13:31-32) teaches such outward growth; and the parables of the field in which tares are mingled with wheat (Matt. 13:24 f.), and of the net filled with fish both good and bad (Matt. 13:47 f.), and of the wise and foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1 f.), depict such a



mingling of disloyal subjects among the loyal in the kingdom. Also, in the various parables where the members of the kingdom are represented as servants, there are some who are careless and worthless and finally condemned (Mark 13:36, Luke 12:47, Matt. 25:30). Evidently the kingdom of God in all these passages has a meaning of its own, and is nearly (some would say exactly) identical with the church.

The Greek word *ecclesia* (translated "church") is found only in one Gospel and only twice (Matt. 16:18; 18:17); and there may be question as to what Aramaic word it represents. We are sure, however, that on neither of these two occasions, when Jesus spoke about the *ecclesia*, was He teaching ecclesiasticism. Whatever the meaning of the promise to Peter and to the other apostles about the rock and the keys and the binding and loosing, the whole tenor of Jesus' teaching is contrary to any interpretation that finds here the charter of an organization designed to rule men with spiritual authority. He condemned in the Pharisees all desire for recognition and rule in matters religious (Matt. 23:5 f.): He declared that the gradation in rank in the kingdom of God is based on willingness to serve (Mark 10:42 f.); and in His farewell commission, while He announced that all authority had been given to Him, He sent forth His followers simply to bear witness and to make disciples (Matt. 28:18 f.; Acts 1:8). Nevertheless, from the very beginning of His ministry Jesus seemed to contemplate a union of those who belonged to the kingdom. The little band of apostles and the larger company of followers from which they were chosen were held together by bonds of love and common devotion to the kingdom. So far as they had any organiza-

tion, they were a brotherhood in which the younger and the older, the strong and the weak, helped one another according to ability and opportunity, while all were in training as witnesses to the kingdom and its king. They were those whom Jesus had called to follow Him, and who in His name were to extend the invitation to others. The day might come when for efficient work they would need officers and creeds and forms of worship and the like; but for the present the need was not felt, and the details of future organization could be ignored.

This band of disciples after the day of Pentecost constitute the church. And sometimes they seem to constitute the kingdom of God in its present realization. But the two are not quite identical. The church is the agency for bringing in the kingdom. It strives to bring every part of human life, the social and political as well as the religious, into loving obedience to the will of the Father.

## XIII

### THE BORDER MINISTRY

#### I. General Character.

THE only geographical name that can be given to this period of Jesus' work is the one found more than once in the Synoptic account of it, namely, borders or coasts, by which is meant not the boundaries but the outer regions of the lands mentioned. According to Mark, Jesus went first to the borders of Tyre (7:24), then passed through Sidon and the midst of the borders of Decapolis (7:31) in a circuit round the lake of Galilee; then, touching at points on the lake, He made His way northward into the villages of Caesarea Philippi (8:27); then He returned through Galilee to Capernaum (9:30, 33). Somewhere in the period we may place two brief visits to Jerusalem for feasts described by John. Capernaum remained His home (9:33, Matt 17:24); but the months were largely taken up with slow journeyings, some of them seemingly with no definite goal.

The restlessness which characterized this period hints of spiritual suffering or, at least, of recognition that the night when no man can work is drawing near. The cross is inevitable. The disciples do not realize this, but their Lord does. Judea has declared it in the worldliness of her leading priests, the bigotry of her spiritual teachers; Galilee has repeated it in the selfishness and sensuousness of her people; Rome has

re-echoed it in the murder of the great forerunner, John the Baptist;—the air is full of voices proclaiming the impending tragedy. Most impressive of all is the voice of ancient prophecy, declaring that the Messiah must lay down his life for his people. But the hour is not yet come; there is work to be done first; and that work is mainly the training of the Twelve so that they will be prepared to proclaim His gospel when He sends them into the world as the Father has sent Him.

Thus far, though the Twelve were always with Him except when they went on their brief independent mission, there had been little opportunity to teach them in private, because of the crowds continually around. And they had advanced so little beyond the status of the crowds that after the general desertion Jesus asked, "Would ye also go away?" This ministry, therefore, was mainly devoted to teaching the Twelve, both by direct instruction and by the influence of constant and closest companionship. And while the theme of His public preaching in Galilee had been the kingdom of God, this private teaching was about "the things concerning himself." Two stages may be distinguished in it—Peter's great confession being the dividing point: a period of teaching that Jesus is indeed the Messiah; and, when this lesson is grasped, a period of teaching that the Messiah must die and rise again. Of the first teaching nothing is preserved (perhaps it was not so much in words as in intimacy and influence); but Peter's confession (Mark 8:29) shows its fruit, and Christ's joy shows how eagerly He had waited for such fruit. Of the second teaching we have preserved various lessons of the cross, given with increasing clearness and detail.

So far as public work is concerned, little was accom-

plished in this ministry; it was not devoted to public work. There was, indeed, a brief popular period in the Decapolis; but the impression made there was as superficial and evanescent as previously in Galilee. But to the Twelve these summer and autumn months must have been wonderfully helpful. Though the immediate result was small, the seed now sown would continue to spring up and bear fruit long after the teacher was taken from them.

The Border ministry began after the close of the popular work in Galilee, i.e., not long after the Passover of 28 A.D.; and it continued until after the Feast of Tabernacles in October of that year, though exactly how long after cannot be determined.

## 2. Among the Gentiles.

Jesus began His ministry by withdrawing from Galilee, and entering, for the first and only time, into Gentile lands—Tyre and afterwards Sidon. Doubtless His purpose was to take His disciples away from the crowds and the Jewish environment which hindered spiritual growth, and to have them alone with Himself. Also, He may have been forced to leave Galilee because of Herod's hostility. The attention of Herod had been aroused (Mark 6: 14); and certainly the report, which must have reached him, that the people had tried to make Jesus king would be sufficient reason for seeking His death. We notice that during the greater part of this ministry Jesus stays outside of Herod's territory, and when He does come back into Galilee, He tries to keep His presence secret (Mark 9: 30); also during this period, or a little later, He is warned that Herod wishes to kill Him (Luke 13: 31).

Here in a heathen land it might seem that He would



remain unknown; but people from this region who had been to Him in Galilee at once recognized Him (Mark 3:8); and a Syro-Phoenician woman, a Gentile, came begging Him to cast a demon out of her daughter. According to Matthew (15:23) the Twelve, when Jesus answered her not a word, joined in her petition. The remarkable hesitation with which He performed the miracle arose in part from unwillingness to do anything that might draw a crowd and hinder the seclusion He was seeking, in part from a wish to test both the faith of the woman and the catholicity of the disciples, but most of all from the knowledge that any work among the Samaritans would end all chance of winning His countrymen. He had, indeed, in Capernaum healed the servant of a centurion, probably a Gentile, at the express request of Jewish elders (Luke 7:1-10); and in the present instance the woman's faith and persistence and humility, together with the petition of the Twelve, caused Him finally to grant her prayer; but there is no record of any other miracle for Gentiles unless, possibly, in Decapolis. Even if there remained but faint hope of winning the Jews, He must put no stumbling block in their way, and give them no excuse for rejecting Him. There would be a day when the Gentile world might come freely to the feast (Luke 13:29)—a plain hint of this is in the statement that the children first must be fed (Mark 7:27); until that day they must wait, though a crumb from the children's table might be given this suppliant woman.

For the same reason Jesus could not reach out to the Jews of the Dispersion. They were more liberal-minded than their brethren in Palestine, better prepared to accept His teachings; and as He had turned from Judea to Galilee, so He might once more turn

from Galilee to the outer lands where His countrymen were waiting for the Messiah. The step seemed natural,—His enemies so considered it (John 7:35); but there was no possibility that in this way he would eventually reach the Sanhedrin, and it was not the way of His supreme manifestation. A Jew of the Dispersion would one day follow Him—bearing the cross to Calvary (Luke 23:26).

### 3. The Work in Decapolis.

From the purely heathen lands of Tyre and Sidon Jesus came with the Twelve into the region known as the Decapolis (the ten cities), south and east of the lake of Galilee. The cities were originally Greek colonies, some of them founded by veterans from the army of Alexander the Great. Alexander Jannaeus (104-78 B.C.) annexed them to the Maccabean kingdom, but Pompey gave them their independence again, about 63 B.C. They were now united in a league, and under the general control of the Romans as a part of Syria; but each city managed its own affairs, coined its own money, and had a large measure of independence. Greek was the general language, and there was much commercial and intellectual activity; several famous Greek scholars came from these cities. The Jews dwelling here would be more nearly like those of the Dispersion than their brethren in Judea and Galilee. That the crowd around Jesus was partly heathen is indicated in Matthew's statement, "They glorified the God of Israel" (15:31).

Once in the Galilean ministry Jesus had crossed the lake to a region of Decapolis where He healed a demoniac (Mark 5:1-20). Any further work there was then impossible because of the selfish opposition

aroused by the destruction of a herd of swine in connection with the healing; but we notice that, contrary to His usual custom, Jesus ordered the news of what He had done to be published widely, which would seem to indicate either that He wished to stir up the men of Decapolis to visit Him in Galilee, or that He planned at some later day to return and labor in this region. Why He now returned and took up the work we are not told. Possibly He felt that having sent the healed demoniac as His herald, He ought to follow him up; more probably it was forced upon His sympathetic attention as He was passing to or from Jerusalem. The work was a brief repetition of that in Galilee, though miracles here, even more than there, seem to have occupied the crowd to the exclusion of teaching; and it ended with another miraculous feeding—this time of four thousand. Many critics consider this miracle to be only another version of the feeding of the five thousand because the details are so similar; but Mark gives a distinct account of both; and if he gained his material from Peter, he could hardly be mistaken. The difficult problem is, Why were the Twelve so much at loss as to how the multitude could be fed (Mark 8:4), if they had previously seen a still larger number fed? But this very detail, so unexpected, makes for the genuineness of the narrative. The only explanation is that the disciples always were surprised at nature miracles, and slow to expect them.

#### 4. At the Unnamed Feast.

“After these things there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem” (John 5:1). If John had only named the feast, how much discussion would have been prevented! “A feast of the Jews”

describes any one in the list, and each has had its advocates. Some manuscripts read "the feast of the Jews," which is slightly more definite but may be Passover, Pentecost, or Tabernacles. John tells the incident in a chapter just preceding that in which he tells of the feeding of the five thousand, thus indicating a feast during the Galilean ministry; but there are strong reasons for thinking that in some way the two chapters have been transposed, or that John did not here follow the chronological order ("after these things" is a mere formula of introduction), and told the incident of the feast directly after the account of the Judean ministry because it seemed to him the real conclusion of that ministry. If we place the unnamed feast after the Passover which was at hand when the five thousand were fed, it naturally would be Pentecost; and the visit of Jesus would fall in the early part of the Border ministry, perhaps even before the work in Decapolis.

Though Jesus seems purposely to have kept away from Jerusalem during the time He was making the attempt to win Galilee, when that attempt had failed he turned to Jerusalem again. There was still a possibility, faint yet not to be neglected, that the rulers might accept Him and proclaim Him the Messiah; and even if, as everything indicated, His death was to be at their hands, they must not be able to plead that they had been misinformed concerning Him;—knowledge of what He was and what He was doing should be given them. Yet to visit Jerusalem was perilous; and if He were arrested and imprisoned or put to death then, His work of training the Twelve would be stopped before it was completed. During the great feasts, where hosts of friendly Galileans were present, He would be safe, at least in daytime,—the nights

must be spent in concealment (John 8:1; Luke 21:37); yet His visits must be so unexpected and brief as to give little opportunity for His enemies to plot and compass His arrest. Accordingly, we find that in this last year of His life He went up to Pentecost (if this was the unnamed feast), Tabernacles and Dedication; but the first two visits seem to have been without the company of the Twelve; the second was "as it were in secret"; and in no case did He remain after the feast was ended. John is the only evangelist who recognizes the importance of these visits and records them.

The Sanhedrin had kept well informed about the Galilean ministry; they knew, for example, that Jesus was accustomed to heal on the Sabbath (John 5:16). In fact, the center of opposition and the chief cause of the failure of the Galilean ministry was Jerusalem. But Jesus had stayed away a full year; and probably the rulers thought He did not dare to venture within their jurisdiction. Now He came up for Pentecost, and deliberately challenged their judgment by healing the best-known, most helpless cripple in the city, one whose thirty-eight years of persistent waiting at the pool of Bethesda had made him the talk and almost the jest of the populace. The rulers could not deny the miracle; and it was a sign, such as the Messiah might properly give, though not such as they had in mind when they put the question of John 2:18. The miracle, however, was performed in such a way,—on the Sabbath and with the command to carry a burden,—as to bring squarely before them the impossibility of accepting Jesus as the Messiah while still retaining their own proud authority as religious guides. (Weiss thinks that the question about His authority (Mark 11:28) was asked now.) The decision was easily made,—in



fact, it had been made already; and Jesus' claim that in His disregard of the Sabbath laws He had acted as the Son of the Heavenly Father, increased the horror with which they regarded Him (5: 16-17). Either this son of Beelzebub must be put to death, or the Pharisees must perish; henceforth it was a fight to the finish.

Possibly at this time Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin. His speech (5: 19 f.) was certainly not to the multitude but to some small body, seemingly official (cf. vs. 33, 39). It is a carefully argued defence of His claims, setting forth what His Sonship really is, the witnesses to it, and the cause of the present unbelief. The Sanhedrin, however, could take no official action against Him because the Sadducees (who formed a majority) and some of the Pharisees (e.g., Nicodemus) were not ready to do so. Still His life was no longer safe in Judea (7: 1). The knife of an assassin, wielded through the instigation and under the protection of the Pharisees, might end it if He were for a moment off His guard.

Concerning this miracle Ellicott says: "This is the turning point in the gospel history. Up to this time the preaching of our Lord in Jerusalem and in Judea had met with a certain degree of toleration, and in many cases even of acceptance; but after this all becomes changed. Henceforth the city of David is no meet or safe abode for the Son of David; the earthly house of His Heavenly Father is no longer a secure hall of audience for the preaching of the Eternal Son." In a very real sense, then, it was the closing act of the Judean ministry; and as the demand throughout that ministry had been for a sign, it was a final test of the rulers by granting that demand in such a way as to prove that their desire for a sign was insincere. What

they lacked was not proof of His Messiahship, but willingness to accept it.

### 5. Peter's Great Confession.

We have already seen reasons why Jesus could not begin His work in Galilee by proclaiming openly, or even to His intimate disciples, that He was the Messiah. Still it was impossible for Him to take up the Messianic work without in some measure revealing Himself: "He could not be hid." As a teacher He spoke with the certainty and independence of one who had intimate knowledge of things divine, and who could calmly set aside the highest human teachings. As a lawgiver He not only abrogated legislation which all His nation considered inspired, but treated His hearers as subjects who were in duty bound to obey the laws which He by His own authority enacted. As a leader He demanded from his followers complete personal surrender and implicit obedience, such as no human being has a right to demand. And as a miracle-worker He both revealed the character of the Messianic kingdom, and acted with the calm assurance possible only to one who, having in His control all the powers of nature, knows that He has simply to will in order to produce a desired effect.

The Twelve had been with Him through the Galilean ministry; and it would seem, at first thought, that such a revelation ought to have made them recognize who their Master was, long before that ministry ended. Its failure to do so is understood when we realize what a transformation of their Messianic ideals was required. They had begun, some of them from the hour when John the Baptist pointed Him out, by accepting Jesus as the Messiah of popular expectation. That

idea had been abandoned in the Galilean days, though not without a sense of disappointment. Simon the Zealot, for example, must have been most reluctant to give up the hope of a Messiah who would drive out the Romans. And James and John still cherished an ambition for chief seats in an earthly kingdom. Though personal love and trust had held them steadfast when the multitude deserted Him, it was evident their sympathies were with the crowd who clamored for a bread-king. They must not be left in this condition. Since the church was to be built upon them, they must be hewn into true foundation stones.

During the crowded days of the Galilean ministry there had been scanty opportunity to give the Twelve special instruction. Occasionally a parable that puzzled the multitude could be privately explained, or a lesson too deep for a general audience could be taught to them; but they needed more thorough and systematic tuition before they could wholly lay aside their old ideas, and grasp the new and higher ones which Jesus set before them. That tuition seems to have been mainly the revelation of Himself to them by continuous and closest companionship. He did not tell them what He claimed to be; He simply let them see what He was. Never had men better opportunity to know a comrade than they had to know Jesus. And what was the result? Contrary to the established rule that familiarity breeds contempt, the more intimately they knew Him, the more deeply they revered Him. As Bushnell points out, "The most conspicuous matter in the history of Jesus is that what holds true in our experience of men is inverted in Him. He grows more sacred, peculiar, wonderful, divine, as acquaintance reveals Him. And exactly this appears in the history

without any token of art, or even apparent consciousness that it does appear,—appears because it is true. Probably no one of the evangelists ever so much as noticed this remarkable inversion of what holds good respecting men, in the life and character of Jesus.”

The first fruit of these months of special teaching was evident when Jesus put the testing question, “Who say ye that I am?”, and Peter acting as the spokesman of the Twelve replied, “Thou art the Christ” (Mark 8:29). The exclamation of joy with which Jesus received this confession of faith shows that it marked an important stage in the spiritual development of the apostles. Such a recognition of His Messiahship at a time when others at the highest regarded Jesus as simply a great prophet, was most significant; it arose through no promptings of ambition or racial pride or selfishness; it was divinely begotten. “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 16:17). And one who had entered so far into the secrets of the kingdom as to recognize its king could hereafter be entrusted with its keys. So the famous promise,—put to strange uses centuries afterwards,—was made to Peter, and a few weeks later to the Twelve collectively (Matt. 16:19; 18:18). But there was one of the number who had remained unresponsive to all the teachings and influence of Jesus. If we take John 6:66-71 to be a brief summary of the period we are now studying, we find in it not only Peter’s confession, given in somewhat different form though with the same significance, but also Christ’s judgment of Judas, “Did I not choose you, the Twelve; and one of you is a devil?” Just what these words signify can better be discussed when the

whole career of Judas is before us. Enough now to contrast them with the words of Peter.

When the disciples thus showed that they were grasping the correct conception of their Messiah, Jesus was encouraged to teach them the culmination of His present Messianic work. "From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up" (Matt. 16: 21). He could not have taught them this earlier; and even now it was so strangely contradictory to all their Messianic ideas they could not grasp it. Peter, who was foremost in spiritual knowledge, was also first to cry out in loving dismay and horror, "Mercy on thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee!" (Matt. 16: 22). Thus the cross at its very first presentation becomes a stumbling block to the disciples; and their distress over it becomes in turn a stumbling block to the Master. The old temptation to find another, less painful path presents itself, and has again to be thrust away with "Get thee behind me, Satan."

## 6. The Transfiguration.

One week after the first revelation of the cross came the transfiguration (Mark 9: 2). In no other passage, except his account of passion week, does Mark state the exact interval between two incidents. He does so now because the two are parts of one situation. Jesus was heavy-hearted from the inability of His disciples to grasp the lesson of the cross, and perhaps, also, from the increasing nearness of the hour of agony; He needed cheer and increase of strength through communion with His Father. The disciples were stag-



gered by the thought of a murdered Messiah; they needed to be reassured by the vision of a transfigured Messiah. The "high mountain" on which the transfiguration took place was probably a shoulder of Mt. Hermon, and the time seems to have been night. Jesus was accustomed to spend nights alone in prayer; but now, as later on at Gethsemane, He took Peter, James and John to be with Him as He prayed. There seems to have been no deliberate intention of being transfigured before them, but rather the wish to admit them into His innermost life, and make them realize that His words about His death were the expression, not of a passing moment of despondency, but of a great purpose which He shared with God in prayer. If they could learn to join with Him in that prayer, the cross might cease to be a stumbling block, and become a foundation of faith.

The experience which followed falls into the same class with the baptism, the temptation and Gethsemane. What it was for Jesus himself,—what message of cheer, what strength for the coming days, He received and how these came,—we are not told. What the three apostles saw and heard was doubtless subjective,—in Matthew's account Jesus plainly calls it "the vision" (17:9); no wandering shepherd, if he had passed at that hour, would have beheld anything more than four men in prayer and meditation. But it was a real and deep experience. For one brief hour the veil which hid their Lord was lifted, and they were "eye-witnesses of his majesty" (II Peter 1:10). It was no longer the Galilean carpenter,—despised, slandered, hated,—who stood before them but a majestic being from whose whole person streamed forth a dazzling white light. And with Him they saw two other

figures whom intuitively they knew to be Moses and Elijah; and they heard these talking with Jesus about "his exodus which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31),—the very event He had so recently foretold, and they had refused to accept. The lesson for them in that conversation,—or at least in the vision of the two great representatives of the law and the prophets conversing on that subject,—was the same as that which Jesus in the walk to Emmaus taught, when "beginning from Moses and from all the prophets he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself"; the lesson, namely, that the Messiah, foreshadowed in the law and foretold by the prophets, was one who through suffering must enter into his glory (Luke 24:25-27). The knowledge that the death of the Messiah was predicted by the great teachers of old would cast no light upon the mystery of his death,—for that the disciples must wait until after the resurrection, and meanwhile tell no man what they had seen (Mark 9:9); but it might help them to realize the necessity of His death. Peter was right when he said, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here"; even though his proposition to prolong the experience by building lodging-booths for the heavenly guests of a vision was absurd. (Possibly the nearness of the Feast of Tabernacles made him think of passing the sacred days here on the mount.) Then sudden fear chilled their desire to tarry; for they were overshadowed by a bright cloud,—according to all Jewish thought, the token of the presence of Jehovah; and out of the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." The words were like those uttered at the baptism; they now were meant to strengthen the faith of the disciples in Jesus as their teacher even

though He was teaching them the mysterious truth that a Messiah must die.

It was a wonderful experience,—indeed, too wonderful for them to grasp at present. Their state of mind as they came down from the mountain reveals this. They dared not ask Jesus what the rising again from the dead should mean, when He spoke of it (Matt. 9:10), for fear of calling forth another rebuke as sharp and mysterious as that which Peter had received the week before. The vision of Elijah reminded them of the prophecy that he must come before the Messiah, and they ventured to ask why it had not been fulfilled. Possibly they had not been with the multitude to whom Jesus declared that John the Baptist was Elijah, or else had failed to grasp the statement which seems to have been in esoteric form (Matt. 11:14 f.). This time they understood that John the Baptist was the fulfilment of the prophecy; but John was dead, which seemed to indicate that Elijah had failed in his mission, and that the Messiah also was going to fail. What, then, could they conclude about the transfiguration? The farther away it became, the more of a mystery it seemed; and when months later the hour arrived in which they most needed its message, they had ceased to bear it in mind.

### 7. The Lessons of the Cross.

As soon as the Twelve had grasped the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, He began to teach them that He must be rejected by the Sanhedrin and be killed and after three days rise again. According to Mark, "he spake the saying openly" (8:31), and later on gave further details,—the betrayal (9:31), the delivery to the Gentiles, the mockery and scourging

(10: 34). Matthew adds to these the crucifixion (20: 19),—a form of death that might be expected if Romans pronounced the sentence. Nevertheless, there is no indication that the disciples were in any way helped by His predictions, when the hour of fulfillment did arrive. They were overwhelmed by His arrest and death, and wholly without hope of His resurrection, exactly as if He never had foretold these events. No emphasis of the dullness and unbelief of the Twelve can account for their total failure to recall His words at the hour when most naturally they would remember them; it must be that the lessons of the cross were much more ambiguous than Mark represents. They are preserved for us not literally but with the interpretation which the events themselves brought; so there is no obscurity. Yet from their present form we conclude that Jesus uniformly used the Son of Man instead of the first personal pronoun in them, which would make the disciples question whether He was speaking about Himself or some other person; and from our knowledge of the apocalyptical form in which He put His teachings about the future coming of the Son of Man, we infer that He put His teachings about the future sufferings of the Son of Man in the same obscure form. When He gave the first of His lessons about the cross, Peter understood that He was talking about His own death, and naturally cried out in horror at the thought; but the sharp rebuke this brought (Mark 8: 33) must have made the disciples suppose that Peter had misunderstood Him in a way that merited censure. Henceforth, whenever He spoke about the death or resurrection of the Son of Man, they listened in silence, not comprehending but afraid to ask Him His meaning (Mark 9: 10,

32; Luke 18:34). The command, given to the three disciples as they came down from the mount of transfiguration, that they should tell the vision to no man (Mark 9:9-10), made the lesson of that vision seem something apart from what He was openly telling the Twelve; so they were unable to use it as the key to His other words. Doubtless the whole story of future sufferings was supposed to be something like a parable whose explanation had not been given them; and they dismissed it as beyond their comprehension.

The question why Jesus should teach thus obscurely about His passion is a difficult one. Unless we refuse to believe that He had a clear knowledge of the future, we must agree that, had He wished to do it, He might have made His statements so plain that the disciples could not fail to understand them and, when the time of His death came, to recall them. The author of the first Gospel is sure that somebody before the resurrection must have remembered that Jesus had said, "After three days I rise again" (Matt. 27:63); but he can assign such remembrance only to the chief priests and Pharisees (27:62 f.). The wisdom of veiling the future from the disciples becomes evident when we consider how minimized their spiritual experience in Passion Week would have been, had they clearly foreseen each of the great events. Knowledge that their Master was to return to them speedily, victorious over death, would have taken away the stress and test of soul which Jesus predicted at the Last Supper, when He said, "Satan hath by asking obtained you that he may sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:31). Yet for Jesus to go up to Jerusalem with Calvary ever in view, and give no hint of it to His companions whom it so intimately concerned, was, humanly speaking, impos-



sible; the craving for their sympathy, and the loving wish to help them in their trials, which are so often manifested in His dealings with the Twelve, would force some revelation of that which filled His thoughts. And, if given in such form that the event made clear the prediction, this revelation would be profitable to the disciples in later years, as helping them to understand what were the thoughts and purpose of their Master at a time when they followed Him in ignorance and fear (Mark 10: 32).

There were lessons of the cross that concerned not alone His own future but that of all disciples; and these, too, Jesus was trying to teach. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mark 8: 34). This was the keynote of many conversations. Few sayings of Christ are more familiar; and yet we often miss its full meaning because we identify self-denial with cross-bearing. There was to be self-denial to the uttermost; and repeatedly He warned would-be disciples to count the cost. Those who followed Him must become homeless, break all family ties, hate even their own lives. But all this was only preparation for cross-bearing. The cross is the symbol of sacrificial service, of burdens borne to lighten heavy-laden shoulders, of redemptive suffering for the sins of others. The imitation of Christ, that goes no further than self-denial, fails to reach the cross, and has no power to bring the world to Him.

From the time when Jesus began to teach the lessons of the cross we are conscious of something even more serious than a failure of the Twelve to understand. There is a lack of sympathy on their part, not great enough to destroy their love and loyalty,

but sufficient to make them unresponsive and sometimes antagonistic. Instead of accepting His lesson of self-denial, they dispute who is the greatest (Mark 9: 34); instead of forgiving their enemies, they want to call down fire upon a Samaritan village that refuses them hospitality (Luke 9: 54); instead of extending generous welcome to all who recognize their Master, they nourish a spirit of exclusiveness (Mark 9: 38); and the question of reward for following Him is bluntly proposed (Matt. 19: 27). Truly the path was made lonely and needlessly hard for Jesus by the very men whom He had chosen to be His comrades. It is pleasant to believe that the natural yearning of His heart for human sympathy and comprehension found at least one cheering response. In the home at Bethany Mary was ready to hear His word with the quick intuition of love (Luke 10: 39); and that she accepted the lesson of the cross and understood it may be inferred from her act and Jesus' words when He came to Bethany on His way to the last Passover (Mark 14: 3 f.). The alabaster cruse of costly spikenard was her token of comprehension and loyal co-operation.

### 8. The Feast of the Tabernacles.

When the summer months were ended, Jesus was back once more in Capernaum; but His presence no longer drew a crowd. In fact, He was evidently seeking to remain hidden (Mark 9: 30). His brethren strongly disapproved of this, and urged Him to go up openly to the autumn feast of Tabernacles which was now at hand (John 7: 2 f.) Why they did this if, as John points out, they did not believe on Him, it is hard to say. They could not have wished to compass

His death; but possibly they thought that this appearance at Jerusalem would be a decisive one; and their private opinion was that it would end His public career, which already seemed at the point of failure, and would thus cause Him to resume the old life of a quiet citizen instead of the exhausting and, to their minds, almost insane course He had been following in recent months. In response He said squarely, "I go not up to this feast" (7:8),—a statement which seemed to later copyists so near a falsehood that they changed the word "not," by a slight alteration, into "not yet." Further reflection on the situation caused Him to recall His decision; He might profitably go up to the feast, though not in such open manner as His brethren suggested,—the time for the triumphal entry had not yet come. Accordingly, "when his brethren were gone up unto the feast, then went he also up, not publicly, but as it were in secret (7:10). There is no reason to suppose that He took the disciples with Him; the statement that He went secretly is opposed to it, and the hostility He was to encounter would not be beneficial to them.

At Jerusalem the whole atmosphere reeked with hostility. The rulers were watching for His appearance (7:11), aroused to this because He had come to the previous feast; and it was understood that they were plotting His death (7:25). The people were discussing His claims, and only a portion (probably Galilean pilgrims) dared speak even secretly in His favor (7:13). It was generally thought that He would not come to the feast, the danger was so great; and when He appeared, the people were astonished, and wondered if the rulers had changed their attitude.

The feast lasted seven or eight days; Jesus arrived

in the midst of it, and stayed until its close. Probably He did not stay longer; there was little reason why He should, and the danger was too great. Going straight into the temple, He began to teach. The boldness of the act at first paralyzed His enemies; and when they recovered and sought to arrest Him, the favor of a part of the multitude protected Him. The scenes that followed reveal a sublimity of fearlessness and strength, the record of which, as Thomas Hughes says, "has done more to make men courageous and truly manly than all the stirring accounts of bold deeds which ever were written elsewhere." Each day Jesus was in the temple, teaching the people who wavered between favor and opposition, uttering promises, warnings, denunciations, making clearer revelations of His superhuman character, and defying the Jewish rulers who were almost beside themselves with helpless rage. They sent the temple guard to arrest Him, and it returned empty-handed with the report, "Never man so spake." They turned in fury upon Nicodemus when he made the fair-minded suggestion that they should not condemn a man unheard. They agreed that whoever should confess that this Nazarene was the Christ should be cast out of the synagogue. They even took up stones to hurl at Him because His claims seemed blasphemous. In short, they were like a pack of wolves, wild with passion, thirsting for blood, yet kept back from their victim by a barrier they could not cross. No man laid hands on Him; He remained in Jerusalem until the feast was ended, uttered the words that were in His heart, and then, having fulfilled the purpose of His coming, went back once more to His waiting disciples in Galilee.

At this visit no miracle was performed; the atmos-

phere was not suitable for one. But Jesus took the ceremony of bringing water in a golden pitcher from Siloam to the temple, which was part of each day's celebration except the last, as the text of His sermon on that last day, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink" (7:37).



## XIV

### JESUS THE MESSIAH

WE have already noticed that while the early part of Jesus' ministry was full of teachings concerning the kingdom of God, from the time when He withdrew from Galilee to begin the private training of the Twelve His teaching centered upon "the things concerning himself." There was great need of such teaching; for the various opinions concerning Him were more than those the disciples stated in their answer to His, "Who do men say that I am?" (Mark 8:27 f.), and the belief of the disciples themselves, "Thou art the Christ," might be held with widely different conceptions of the Messiah. We shall be helped in understanding the whole ministry of Jesus, if we pause at this point to consider briefly both what the people thought about Him and what He taught about Himself. And in considering the latter we must bear in mind the same presuppositions as when studying what He taught about the kingdom of God, viz.: that he had to suit His teachings to His audience; that He may have been misunderstood and wrongly reported; that his ideas were in harmony with the highest in the Old Testament; and that the Christian centuries have made the meaning of His words more evident.

In every other biography we have to distinguish not only between a man's estimate of himself and his

associates' estimate of him, but also between both of these and his true character. In the case of Jesus we can take His statement of what He was as absolutely correct. With His marvellous knowledge of other men He had, also, full knowledge of Himself. Of course, this must be denied by those who hold that He changed His opinion several times, deeming Himself at first to be merely a disciple of John the Baptist, next to be a prophetic teacher, and finally to be the Messiah. Such change of mind is called the development of the Messianic consciousness; but it shows a deficiency in self-knowledge which does not inspire confidence in even the final opinion. Indeed, some think that Jesus died on the cross with a cry of dismay at the rude awakening from His delusion that He was the Messiah. In the opinion of the writer, the theory that there can be traced through the public ministry of Jesus a gradual development of Messianic consciousness has no foundation in fact, and arises from confusing His progressive self-revelation to the disciples, as they were able to receive it, with His actual self-knowledge. The things concerning Himself were the deepest, hardest lessons He had to impart; and He could proceed no faster in His teaching than His disciples were ready to receive; but this necessary limitation in his statement of what He was does not involve or imply a corresponding limitation in His own knowledge.

The theme of this chapter may be most simply treated by considering the significance of some of the titles that others gave Jesus and of those that He Himself assumed.

### 1. The Prophet from Nazareth.

'A prophet, in the Biblical sense of the word, is a

man who speaks for God, uttering a message divinely given. He may speak about the future; but his mission is to offer warning, counsel or cheer in the present. He is God's spokesman, and his words are with divine authority. The uniqueness of Israel's history arises from the long line of such men who resolutely strove to lead the nation forward in the path of Jehovah's purposes.

When John the Baptist came forward, a prophet had long been lacking, and the lack was sorely felt. The people counted him a prophet (Matt. 14:5), and Jesus endorsed their opinion (Matt. 11:9), though He added that John was much more than a prophet. And of Jesus Himself in His Galilean ministry men said, "A great prophet has arisen among us, and God has visited his people" (Luke 7:16). Some went still farther, and identified him with one of the old prophets, Elijah or Jeremiah, or with the prophet whom Moses foretold (Matt. 16:14; John 6:14; 7:40). Even at the triumphal entry the multitude said, "This is the prophet, Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee" (Matt. 21:11). It was the most natural explanation both of the authority with which He taught (Mark 1:22) and of the miracles He wrought (Luke 7:16); He was, as the two disciples on the way to Emmaus said, "a prophet mighty in deed and word" (Luke 24:19).

Jesus never assumed the title. Once at Nazareth He applied to Himself the proverb, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country" (Mark 6:4); and once, speaking of His journey to death, He said with severest sarcasm, "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Luke 13:33). But in the parable of the wicked husbandman (Mark

12:1 ff.), in which the servants sent to receive the fruits are the prophets, He assigns Himself the far higher position of the only and beloved son of the lord of the vineyard. It is the same distinction that is made in His two statements, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" and "He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (Matt. 10:41, 40). Those who, like Nicodemus, regard Jesus as simply a teacher with a divine commission, fail to grasp this distinction. It is true that He taught with authority, and was called rabbi by His disciples; but He claimed for Himself a higher mission than simply to proclaim a message from God; and the knowledge of the Father which He possessed was that of a son and not of a prophet (Luke 10:22).

## 2. Son of David and King of Israel.

The long occupancy of the Jewish throne by the dynasty of David, and the promises of the prophets that this occupancy should continue forever, made the two terms, son of David and king of Israel, practically identical. True, the Maccabean kings had not been descendants of David; but the Pharisees looked back upon them as impious usurpers whose final overthrow was a merited punishment by Jehovah. Now that the throne stood empty many expected a son of David would one day occupy it. The story of the birth of Jesus reflects this expectation; but the clearest expression of it is in the Psalms of Solomon, which were composed 70-40 B.C., and were the highest thought of the Pharisees. E.g., "Thou, O Lord, didst choose David to be king over Israel, and swarest to him, touching his seed, that never should his kingdom fail

before thee. But for our sins sinners rose up against us. . . . They laid waste the throne of David in tumultuous arrogance. . . . Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David, at the time in the which thou seest, O God, that he may reign over Israel, thy servant. Gird him with strength that he may shatter unrighteous rulers, and that he may purge Jerusalem from nations that trample her down to destruction. . . . He shall judge peoples and nations in the wisdom of his righteousness. And he shall have the heathen nations to serve him under his yoke" (Ps. 17: Charles' translation).

In Galilee the desire for a restoration of David's throne seems to have been faint; probably the people were satisfied with the rule of Herod Antipas, and did not relish the thought of becoming tributary to Judea. Accordingly the Galileans had little to say about Jesus as the son of David (Matt. 9: 27 f. seems a duplicate of 20: 29 f., and 12: 23 is peculiar to Matthew), and when they would crown Him king it was on the ground that He was "the prophet that cometh into the world" (John 6: 14). It was during the closing months of His life, when He was teaching in Peraea, that the cry for a political kingdom was raised. So we find that when Jesus came up to Jerusalem for the last time, He was hailed repeatedly as son of David (Mark 10: 47 f.; Matt. 21: 9, 15) and His possible kingship was discussed by friend and foe. The charge which forced Pilate to condemn Him was that He proclaimed Himself a king (Luke 23: 2; John 19: 12); and over His cross in mockery was written, "The king of the Jews."

Jesus accepted both titles, the king of the Jews and the son of David, yet not with their popular signifi-



tion; a political kingdom was a temptation which at the outset He had put behind Him. He told Pilate that He was indeed a king, but that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36)—a fact which Pilate already knew, since the Pharisees never would have delivered over a king who set himself in opposition to Caesar. And when He propounded to the Pharisees the problem of David's relationship to the Messiah, as set forth in Ps. 110:1, asking, "If, then, David calleth him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matt. 22:45), He was not only accepting the title which they demanded that He disclaim (Matt. 21:15 f.), but also meeting an objection they had raised against His right to it, namely, that He could not be the Messiah because He was not of the seed of David (John 7:42). Instead of pointing out His own descent from David and His birth in Bethlehem, He showed that the scribes gave a false idea of the Messiah when they emphasized the fact that he was the son of David. They taught that he would be like his ancestor, a great warrior ruling an earthly kingdom gained by battle; whereas, in the Psalm David looks up to the Messiah as his Lord and one who instead of being called upon to fight has from Jehovah the invitation, "Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet" (Mark 12:36). How can the teaching of the scribes be reconciled with that of the Psalmist?

The kingdom of which Jesus is king—so He told Pilate—is the kingdom of the truth: "Every one that is of the truth heareth (i.e., obeyeth) my voice" (John 18:37); in other words, it is the kingdom of heaven. That kingdom, as we have noted, is the rule of the Father; but also it has been appointed by the Father unto Him (Luke 22:29). "To the evangelists

and the New Testament generally, the kingdom has its king—not simply God but Jesus whom God has chosen; and the king—He whom God has chosen—has the kingdom. There may be a question as to how precisely the kingship is to be understood. That is a question of interpretation. There may be a still graver question as to its precise historic equivalent in the consciousness of Jesus Himself. But, indubitably, to all the New Testament writers, Jesus is the king; and from their point of view, it is practically one and the same thing to say God reigns and Jesus reigns” (Muirhead).

### 3. The Son of God.

In the Old Testament the relation of the Jewish nation to God was described as that of a son to a father (Ex. 4:22, Hos. 11:1); and because the king represented the nation, he in a special sense was called the son of God (II Sam. 7:14; Ps. 89:26 f.). It was natural, therefore, that the son of God should be used as a title for the Messianic King (Ps. 2:7). The evidence for its use in the time of Jesus is scanty except in the Gospels where it is abundant. Nathanael says to Jesus, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art king of Israel” (John 1:49); Peter confesses, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16); the highpriest demands, “Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God” (Matt. 26:63): in all these instances, son of God is used as a synonym of the accompanying term; so also in the taunts when He hung on the cross (Matt. 27:40, 42), and in Martha’s confession (John 11:27). The demoniacs who proclaimed Him Son of God and the holy one of God (Luke 4:41; Mark 1:24) were

only voicing with outspoken fear the Messianic belief which lay as a question in the minds of the bystanders. Whatever may have been the full meaning of the divine proclamation at the baptism, "Thou art my beloved Son," its immediate message to Jesus, as the temptation shows, was that He was the Messiah; and the similar proclamation on the mount of transfiguration bore to the disciples the same message. Yet the Son of God, as a Messianic title, must have had a different meaning from the son of David. It brought to the front the divine claims to the throne rather than the human; it suggested a supernatural being, and a kingdom established by some special manifestation of God's power. It was this connotation of the term that filled Pilate with apprehension when the Jews declared that Jesus "made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7). Possibly Pilate understood by it simply a demigod, such as Romans recognized; more likely, he knew enough of Jewish expectations to understand it in the Jewish sense; at any rate, it meant to him, as to the others, a person claiming peculiar divine relations and support.

In the Synoptics Jesus never uses the term Himself, though He accepts it gladly when Peter uses it in his confession; and at the last, when reserve is no longer necessary, He replies "I am" to the question of the highpriest, "Art thou the Son of God?" (Mark 14:62). Whether the two occasions in John where He is reported to have used it (5:18; 10:36) are to be accepted as historical or are the evangelist's own choice of a term to express the meaning of Jesus, we cannot say. But in John repeatedly and in three passages in the Synoptics (Luke 10:22; Mark 13:32; Matt. 28:19) Jesus speaks of Himself as "the Son," with

a significance that is evidently more than Messianic. So, too, in the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Mark 12: 1 f.) and in His question to the Pharisees, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he?" (Matt. 22: 42), He is claiming a relationship to God much higher than what popular thought assigned to the Messiah. This relationship is revealed not only in the way in which He spoke of Himself but also in the way in which He spoke of "my Father" and "your Father." Long ago Horace Bushnell, in a classic chapter of his "Nature and the Supernatural," pointed out that the character of Jesus forbids His possible classification with men. With equal truth it may be said that the attitude of Jesus to God, as shown in word and in deed, forbids His classification with men; they may be sons of God, He is the Son of God.

It is apart from the purpose of this book to discuss whether the sonship of Jesus was ethical or metaphysical, i.e., whether He was the Son of God because of His perfect harmony in will and thought and feeling with the Father, or He was the Eternal Son made manifest in the flesh. Such a discussion would take us out of the realm of history into that of theology, and our subject is the history of Jesus. That history, unless we refuse to base it on the gospel records and undertake to frame it by pure conjecture, establishes His claim to be called the Son of God, not only in the Jewish Messianic sense, but also with a significance that proclaims Him the unique and central figure in the world's history.

#### 4. The Son of Man.

The Son of Man is the most interesting of all the titles of Jesus because it was the one He took for Him-

self. With the exception of Stephen's words in the hour of martyrdom (Acts 7:56), which evidently were connected with Luke 22:69, it is found only in the lips of Jesus or of those who quote Him; but he uses it on about forty different occasions. It is, also, a most perplexing title, arousing discussion not only among those who listened to Him (John 12:34), but also among the scholars in the present day. Indeed, to determine the meaning that Jesus put into it, "has justly been described as the most confused and intricate problem in New Testament theology" (Mackintosh). There are some who,—basing their argument upon the fact that Jesus spoke Aramaic,—take away from it all meaning except that of "man" in general; and there are others who make it such a clear Messianic title that the failure of Jesus' hearers to grasp the meaning is inexplicable. Some hold that it emphasizes the humanity of Jesus,—as if that needed emphasis, being most evident; and others consider it equivalent to "the ideal man," the type of the human race,—a subtle philosophic thought whose Jewish expression, if a Jewish mind entertained it, would be "the second Adam," rather than the Son of Man.

Without stopping to discuss these possible meanings, we may note that the title had been used long before the days of Jesus with various significations. "Son of man" in Ezekiel designates the prophet himself, and emphasizes his weakness and utter dependence upon God; "the son of man" in Ps. 8:4 means man in general, but man as the heir of creation, the favored of God, ranking close to angels in glory; a form like unto "a son of man" in the apocalyptic part of Daniel (7:13 f.) represents "the saints of the Most High," whose kingdom is to be everlasting, while



heathen nations with their transient power are represented in the form of beasts. From the use of the term in Daniel the development of a Messianic meaning in it by later apocalypses would be most natural; and we do find it used with that meaning in portions of the Book of Enoch, written probably not long before the Christian era. The Son of Man in Enoch is a personal title for a supernatural, pre-existent being who, coming to earth, sits on the throne of his glory, which is likewise God's throne, and rules all nations and executes all judgment. He is the Messiah of apocalyptic expectation. This meaning of the term would be less familiar because it had so recently been developed.

With such a history the Son of Man must have been decidedly an ambiguous term in the days of Jesus; and the people who heard Him use it would not always give it the same meaning. In certain instances they would understand Him to be speaking, as did the Psalmist, about man generically, e.g., Mark 2:10, 28. More often they would recognize that He was speaking about Himself; and since they accepted Him as a prophet, they would suppose that He was assuming a designation much like that which Jehovah gave to Ezekiel, e.g., Luke 7:34; 9:58; 19:10; 22:48. In John 12:23-24 they evidently at the beginning understood Him to be talking about the apocalyptic Messiah, but were led by His later statements to question whether He was using the term with its Messianic meaning. The Messianic meaning was, however, clearly expressed and understood in His answer to the highpriest (Mark 14:62). In His private conversations with His disciples Jesus seems to have used the term sometimes with evident self-designation and

sometimes with evident reference to the future Messiah, but seldom if ever in such a way that the two would be recognized as unquestionably identical. Indeed, in such statements as "whosoever shall be ashamed of me, the Son of Man also shall be ashamed of him" (Mark 8:38), He seemed to speak of Himself and the Son of Man as two distinct persons. It is no wonder that the disciples were puzzled to know what He meant. For example, all His teachings about His impending death were, according to Mark, statements as to what should befall the Son of Man; and, as they listened, the Twelve at first understood that He was talking about Himself, but they were rebuked and seemingly led to think the Son of Man was the future Messiah (Mark 8:32-38); then, when they had settled upon this meaning, they were told that the Son of Man must arise from the dead which in no way agreed with the coming of the Messiah in glory (Mark 9:9-10); and presently they found themselves in a state of perplexity where they neither understood nor dared to ask His meaning (9:31-32).

Just what did the term mean to Jesus Himself? This, of course, is the most important question. The answer is not easy, and is made more difficult because we are not always sure about the evangelists' reports, e.g., on three occasions Matthew has Son of Man when the parallel accounts indicate that Jesus did not use it (12:32; 16:13, 28). Nor can we be sure that Jesus always used it with the same meaning. But evidently in most instances, if not in all, He used it as a Messianic title. The theory that Jesus did not believe Himself to be the Messiah, and undertook merely to prepare His people for a future Messiah, can be maintained only by discrediting the whole gospel narrative. It is one

of those paradoxical propositions which certain scholars set forth and thereby draw attention to themselves. The reticence of Jesus concerning His Messiahship, especially in the popular Galilean ministry, can best be explained,—as we have seen,—by the necessity of teaching the true character of the Messianic kingdom before announcing Himself to be its ruler. The men who were to be asked to choose Him as their king must first understand what the choice involved; otherwise their action would be of no real value. To proclaim Himself the Messiah, or to adopt the well-known Messianic titles, “the son of David” and “the Son of God,” would at once arouse excitement, and attract a crowd of followers, some thirsting for vengeance upon the Romans, some hungering for material comforts, some expecting marvels and prodigies, but few or none seeking the spiritual blessings He waited to bestow. Nevertheless, in preaching the gospel of the kingdom, Jesus could not assume the attitude of a mere herald, a John the Baptist. The kingdom was His, and He must not seem to waive all claims to it. So He took for Himself a title, unfamiliar yet truly Messianic, “the Son of Man.” It did not excite the people because often they did not give it a Messianic meaning, and when they did, they thought of the apocalyptic Messiah, for whose coming they could do nothing more than patiently wait with longing; and yet, by its Old Testament associations, it “struck a chord that must have vibrated in every heart” (Worsley).

Probably Jesus chose the Son of Man for His title because it was so obscure, and because it suited equally well His present work as prophet and His future work as king; as the Son of Man He was now revealing the

Father, and as the Son of Man hereafter He would come in the glory of the Father. And He must have felt a fondness for the term because it had gathered such rich connotations in its development. Man generically, man in his need and weakness, man in his power and greatness, man in his ideal state as a saint of God,—all these meanings had enriched the title before it became a personal one for the Messiah. Hence, as a Messianic title it ever suggests the relations of the Messiah to mankind. Jesus could and did use it in connection both with His present weakness and suffering and with His future power and glory, because in all stages of His work, as servant or as king, He presented Himself as the Saviour of men. The Son of God has an upward look to the Father; the Son of Man, with no less of divine significance, has ever an outward look upon the great world of the human race.

### 5. The Future Coming of the Son of Man.

In studying the teachings of Jesus about the kingdom of God we noted that in addition to His abundant instructions about what may be called the ethical kingdom, there was a distinct line of teachings about the eschatological kingdom, i.e., the kingdom to be established at the end of the present age with outward circumstance and by supernatural agency after the fashion of apocalyptical thought. It is usually mentioned in connection with a future coming of the Son of Man in glory to establish it; therefore, its consideration was postponed until we had endeavored to determine the meaning of the title, the Son of Man.

The whole subject is not an easy one; and it suffers from too much attention on the part of a few, as well

as from total neglect on the part of many. Its difficulties arise not only through the great differences between the two kingdoms, but also through seemingly contradictory statements as to when the Son of Man shall come. Now, whatever theory we adopt about the limitations of Jesus' knowledge, we cannot suppose that He was uncertain about the character of His kingdom, or that at one moment He said the events He was describing in connection with it would take place in that generation, and the very next moment declared that only the Father knew the day and hour (Mark 13:30-32). Confucius laid down the rule, "When you know a thing, to know that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to know that you do not know it:—this is knowledge"; and certainly Jesus had reached the Confucian standard of wisdom. But though the kingdom and the way in which it was to be established must have been clear to His own mind, two important facts could not be made clear to His disciples. One was that the supreme event by which He would be declared to be the Son of God with power was the resurrection (Rom. 1:4); the other was that, after He had thus fully established the kingdom, the work of proclaiming it and persuading men to enter it was to be left to His disciples until a far-off day when He should return once more for its consummation. To make His disciples understand was impossible, when even the fact of His death was veiled from them; yet to keep utter silence about these central truths when teaching the things of the kingdom and the things concerning Himself was equally impossible. Even at the risk of being misunderstood He must try to make His hearers share something of the thoughts that filled His own mind.



In the light of our present knowledge we can distinguish three distinct advents of the Son of Man to establish His kingdom; he came from the humble home in Nazareth; He came again from the riven tomb in Jerusalem; and He is yet to come from the right hand of the Majesty on high. We may expect, therefore, to find that whatever Jesus taught about a future coming is, if correctly reported, in reference either to His death and resurrection or to His final appearance as the judge of the world. The first assignment of a date for His coming is His command to the Twelve when they went forth on their independent mission in Galilee: "When they persecute you in this city, flee into the next; for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man come" (Matt. 10:23). Evidently these words are a warning against spending fruitless labors upon hostile cities; and the reason assigned is the brevity of the time that remains; the harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few (Matt. 9:37), and it will not be possible to reach all the fields before the Son of Man comes. The warning was uttered at an hour when the signs of failure in the Galilean work made the nearness of His death certain; but it is not necessarily a prediction that His death and resurrection would take place before the Twelve returned from their brief tour. If it had been so understood, the promptness with which it was shown to be incorrect would have kept the disciples from treasuring it in memory or reporting it without explanation. The next date assigned was when in connection with Peter's great confession Jesus said that some who were then with Him would not die before they saw the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (Matt. 16:28) or, according to Mark, the

kingdom of God come with power (9:1). This is thought by some to refer to the transfiguration, which took place a week later; but the very form of the statement implying the death of some shows that it could hardly refer to an event so immediately at hand; and it is better understood as a reference to His death and resurrection about which He was at this time giving them the first lesson. Along with this should be put His statement in His final testimony before the Sanhedrin that from that hour forward they should see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven (Matt. 26:64), which, again, refers to His glorification by death and resurrection. In the great discourse on the Mount of Olives He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and said that after that tribulation the Son of Man would come in clouds with great power and glory (Mark 13:26). The disciples supposed it to be "immediately" after (Matt. 24:29) but as He Himself declared that He did not know the day or the hour, we conclude that the close connection of these two events was made by the disciples and not by Him. This coming is evidently the same as that at the final day of judgment (Matt. 25:31).

In considering the apocalyptic form of His teachings about the future kingdom, we may assign some of it to the evangelists. The author of the First Gospel, which is most Jewish in character, insists on interpreting Jesus' statements according to Jewish eschatological ideas, while in the Gospel of Luke there is much less of such interpretation, and in John scarcely any. And the passage that in all the Synoptists most abounds in eschatology, the discourse on the Mount of Olives, is thought by some critics to incorporate a Jew-

ish apocalypse (Mark 13:7-9a, 14-20, 24-27, 30-31) which in the opinion of the evangelist expressed the ideas of Jesus about the future. Probably, also, those who originally listened to Jesus as He taught about the future understood Him to be setting forth apocalyptic ideas because their own minds were already full of such ideas. Certainly the questions that called forth the discourse on the Mount of Olives, if Matthew states them correctly (24: 3), indicate that the disciples in their own thought synchronized the destruction of Jerusalem, the coming of the Messiah, and the end of the present æon; and probably it is this confusion of their ideas that causes the difficulty when we seek to determine the relative time of each of the three events by studying their report of that discourse. Again, nothing is more likely than that Jesus, in order to reach His hearers, adopted the apocalyptic form in some of His teachings without endorsing apocalyptic conceptions. We notice, for example, that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19 f.) is full of Jewish eschatological ideas, yet we do not accept them as the ideas of Jesus about the hereafter; they are simply a familiar setting for the one great lesson of the parable, which is that whoever selfishly shuts himself away from humanity's need will be left thus separated and alone hereafter when in sorest need himself.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to eliminate all the apocalyptical element from the teaching of Jesus. And the fact that His teaching contained this element is confirmed by the prevalence of apocalyptical expectations in the early church, both the Jewish and the Gentile (e.g., Acts 3: 19-21, I Peter 4: 13, I Thess. 4: 16 f.). The return of Jesus in the near future, and the establishment of His kingdom by a startling mani-

festation of His power and glory, were eagerly expected by these Christians; and their whole conception of their present work as His disciples was fashioned accordingly. They believed that He had gone back to the Father because the world was not yet ready to receive Him, and had left them to prepare the people for His second coming, somewhat as John the Baptist had tried to prepare them for His first coming. Whenever the preparation was complete,—and they hoped the time was near,—He would return in glory, and establish an eternal kingdom by acts of judgment and reward. The motto of the Apostolic Age was *maran atha*, “Our Lord cometh” (I Cor. 16:22); and when it could no longer be used unquestioningly, the Apostolic Age ended.

The words of Jesus about His final coming still await interpretation; and if we are to judge by the past, they will not become clear until experience makes them so. All the teachings of Israel’s prophets failed to make the nation understand the way in which Jesus was to come the first time; all His own teachings failed to make His disciples understand the way in which He was to come the second time; is it likely that the teachings concerning the way in which He is yet to come will be more clearly understood? The lessons about His future kingdom are given in parable and apocalypse; we cannot take them literally; yet who can say how else they should be taken?

## XV

### THE PERAEAN MINISTRY

#### I. The General Character.

**P**ERAEAE,—“the land across,”—was a loosely defined region extending from the Decapolis to the Arnon (about seventy miles), and from the Jordan east to the desert; it was the old land of Gilead and the northern part of Moab,—a larger region than Judea or Galilee. With an average elevation of two thousand feet above the Mediterranean, with temperate climate, fine pastures, fertile soil, it was well suited for a large population, if protected from the ravages of the desert rangers. Today it is a land of ruins because it lacks such protection: but in the days of Christ, when Herod Antipas ruled it and held marauders in check, it abounded in cities. The population was so largely heathen that orthodox Jews despised it. The rabbis said, “Judea is the wheat; Galilee, the chaff; Peraea, the tares.” It was in this land across the Jordan that Jesus spent much of the last months of His life; for which reason we call the whole period the Peraean ministry.

The purpose of this ministry arose out of the situation. Jesus had been rejected by Judea and Galilee; the Twelve had recognized His Messiahship, and received some special training for the future; the conflict with the Sanhedrin was on, and its evident issue was the cross: but, if possible, the end must not come until the next Passover, and then at Jerusalem. “With



desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15); "I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Luke 13:33). In one sense the whole Peraean ministry was, as Luke describes it, a slow journey towards Jerusalem, i.e., it looked towards Jerusalem at every step, and was to culminate in the triumphal entry and the crucifixion. As a journey it had no definite route or length or stay in any place; there were interruptions (e.g., the visit to Jerusalem for the feast of Dedication and to Bethany for the raising of Lazarus); and during the last part of it Jesus was in retirement at Ephraim. But it was, also, for the most part a period of active ministry, made more intense by the knowledge that the time was growing short. "We must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

The present work of Jesus was chiefly the further training of the Twelve, an unending task. Now that they knew Him to be the Messiah, they could gain a clearer idea of His Messianic mission and character by joining once more in a public ministry, after the comparative seclusion of the previous months. But for this a new field was necessary. Judea was too dangerous; any prolonged stay and work there would bring about situations in which He could escape death only by using His miraculous power for His own safety,—a thing He ever refused to do. Galilee was too unresponsive; it had already turned away and cared little for His words. Samaria would not do; since any work there would seem to justify the opposition of the Jewish rulers who already were declaring Him to be a demonized Samaritan (John 8:48). Peraea was the

only untried Jewish soil. Its people were comparatively free from the influence of the Jewish rulers, so that Jesus would not be hindered by emissaries of the Sanhedrin; and yet it was so near Judea that He could easily make unexpected visits to Jerusalem. For, after all, the real center of this ministry was Jerusalem, and the chief work was in anticipation of the final action of the Sanhedrin. The Gospel of John is the most valuable record at this point because it alone gives us the increasing self-revelation of Jesus to the rulers and their increasingly hostile response.

The Jews across the Jordan thronged around Jesus in a way that at times reminds us of the early Galilean days, though miracles seem to have played a minor part in drawing them. So far as we can judge, their wish was that Jesus would proclaim Himself king, and achieve for them independence. There is no definite statement to that effect; but we note that, as this ministry nears its close, there is a confident expectation that the kingdom of God is immediately to appear (Luke 19:11), and James and John seek for themselves the principal places in it (Mark 10:37). The rulers at Jerusalem are afraid that Jesus will head an insurrection against the Romans (John 11:48). The Triumphal Entry, which the people think to be a public acceptance of the throne of David, is the culmination of the Peraean ministry. There was nothing elsewhere to stir up such purely political demands from the Messiah. In Judea the Sadducees were on the side of the Romans, and the Pharisees were waiting for Jehovah at His pleasure to free His chosen people by supernatural means. In Galilee the people were not anxious for independence; trade, commerce and life in general prospered too well under Roman rule; and

Herod Antipas, "whatever may be said of his morals, was, as a ruler, liberal, energetic and capable in every sense" (Merrill). When the Galileans sought to make Jesus king, it was because they desired, not release from the Romans, but loaves and fishes. What the state of things in Peraea was we have no means of knowing, except from the gospel account. There was little resistance to the Romans in 68 A.D., probably because the population was less Jewish than even that of Galilee. But the very predominance of Gentiles would make the Jews more restless and eager for a political Messiah who might reclaim their land from the heathen; and with such desire they would welcome the coming of Jesus.

This ministry covers the period from the close of the Border ministry till Passion Week. The date of the end is certain; that of the beginning is less so. Some would make it just before or even immediately after the feast of Dedication which came the latter part of December. The argument from weather is for an earlier beginning. At the outset crowds follow Jesus (Mark 10: 1; Luke 12: 1; 14: 25), which would hardly happen in the rain or snow of a December on the highlands across the Jordan, but would be natural in the period after the autumn harvest feast, when farm-work was suspended and the rainy season had not set in. If we make the Peraean ministry begin in October, soon after Tabernacles, we shall have a time of semi-activity after Dedication and of retirement in Ephraim after the raising of Lazarus; there were special reasons for these, but the inclement weather might, also, play a part in causing them.

## 2. The Record of this Ministry.

Mark, who is followed by Matthew, has only a brief record of the Peraean ministry with the following incidents: the question about divorce, the blessing of little children, the rich young ruler, a lesson of the cross, the ambitious request of James and John, and the healing of Bartimaeus. He seems to distinguish, even in this brief account, two stages,—a general work after coming “into the borders of Judea and beyond the Jordan” (10: 1), and a final journey “going up to Jerusalem” (10: 32), apparently just before the last Passover.

John has three incidents belonging to this period, viz.: the feast of Dedication with its miracle of healing the blind man, the raising of Lazarus, and the retirement to Ephraim.

Apparently the great source for this ministry is Luke. He tells all that Mark and Matthew do, except the question about divorce and the request of James and John; and he has also a long, independent narrative (9: 51-18: 15) seemingly belonging to the period after the final departure from Galilee, and giving the events and still more largely the teachings in a journey towards Jerusalem (9: 51, 59; 10: 38; 13: 22, 23; 17: 11). We find, however, in this narrative some incidents that Matthew and Mark assign to other periods, e.g., the conditional offer of certain men to follow Jesus (9: 57-60), the lesson of the Lord's Prayer (11: 1-4), the charge of diabolism and the request for a sign (11: 14-32), the parables of the mustard-seed and the leaven (13: 18-20), and the lament over Jerusalem (13: 34-35). Certain other incidents found only here seem to suit better the Galilean ministry, e.g., the

healing on the Sabbath of a bowed woman and of a dropsical man (13: 10 f.; 14: 1 f.), which reflect the situation when the attitude of Jesus towards the Sabbath was first causing censure; and the dinner with the Pharisee (11: 37 f.) which, together with the miracle and accompanying discourse immediately preceding it (cf. Matt. 12: 22 f.), belong to the time when the charge of diabolism was brought forward. What shall we hold, then, about this whole section in Luke? Is it "the great insertion" filling up historically a gap left by Mark and Matthew; or is it "the scrap-basket" into which Luke put all the incidents to which he could not assign a definite chronological place? The latter view seems much more probable. Some of this section has a topical unity, and may have come to him already arranged (e.g., Weizsacker thinks Luke 14 was originally a compilation of instructions for the common meal of the early Christians); the rest of it seems to be without any arrangement, and put in its present place simply because it remained on hand after the other ministries had been described, though a considerable portion of it really belonged elsewhere. If this is so, our knowledge of the exact course and events of the Peraean ministry must remain uncertain, which explains the fact that modern lives of Jesus vary most widely in precisely this portion of the narrative.

### 3. The Public Work in Peraea.

According to Luke, Jesus began His Peraean ministry by sending out seventy disciples to go before Him as heralds, two by two, into every city and place whither He was coming, and to proclaim, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (10: 1 f.). The account presents difficulties. No hint is given as to



the place from which these heralds were sent or where they were to meet Him again; much of their instructions is the same as that to the Twelve; and the concluding woes against the cities of the lake (10: 13 f.), as well as the prayer of rejoicing when the seventy make their report, are placed by Matthew in the Galilean ministry. Apparently the purpose of the sending is to arouse expectation so that crowds shall surround Jesus when He comes. Such a purpose might have suited the early Galilean ministry; but Jesus is no longer appealing to crowds, and Herod now would not ignore great popular demonstrations. It is possible, of course, that Luke is correct, and has preserved a remarkable chapter in the ministry of Jesus, which otherwise would have been unknown; but the argument seems strong that what he gives is simply another version of the mission of the Twelve. He had already given that mission in its proper place (9: 1 f.) but his material included instructions suiting a broader work than the little tour in Galilee. In his opinion the Peraean ministry was increasingly a triumphal procession to Jerusalem for which an advance proclamation by a large number of disciples would be fitting; it was, also, the nearest approach to a universal mission that he could discover in the work of Jesus, for Peraea was a land of Gentiles as well as Jews. Accordingly he supposed that at the beginning of this ministry there was a mission of seventy disciples,—seventy signifying all the nations of the earth (that is their number in Genesis 10) even as twelve signified the Jewish tribes,—and he assigned to it whatever of his material did not seem to suit the Galilean mission.

In the opinion of some scholars Luke's narrative indicates three different journeys towards Jerusalem

(9:51; 13:22; 17:11), corresponding to the visits described in John, to the feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication and to Bethany for the resurrection of Lazarus. If so, we would have here an undesigned harmony between the two gospels; but the arrangement of Luke's material is too loose, and the statements of time and place too vague, to establish it. Others place in this period a work in Samaria, though the only hints of it are that, probably when Jesus was leaving Galilee, a Samaritan village refused to receive Him because He seemed bound for Jerusalem (9:53); and, as He was passing along the borders of Samaria and Galilee, possibly directly after this refusal, He healed ten lepers, of whom only one, and he a Samaritan, turned back to thank Him (17:11-19). A Samaritan ministry is improbable at any time and most of all in these last months when everything centered upon the action of the rulers at Jerusalem.

In Peraea itself we cannot trace the wanderings of Jesus nor shape any narrative of events; the material for it has not been preserved. But we are doubtless right in concluding that the public work there consisted mainly in teaching (Mark 10:1). To be sure, Matthew begins his description by stating that great multitudes followed Jesus and He healed them there (19:2); but this is simply Matthew's favorite introductory statement to any public work (e.g., 4:23 f.; 9:35; 14:14; 15:30). The time for a general ministry of healing was past; it had been tried and found of little spiritual profit.

The character of the teaching is shown in the Peraean parables. Bruce in his excellent study divides the parables into three groups according to their character, viz.: theoretic parables, by which he means those

that teach the general truths concerning the kingdom of God; parables of grace; and parables of judgment. It is instructive to notice that eight out of the fourteen in his first group belong to the Galilean ministry; nine out of the twelve in his second group belong to the Peraean ministry,—if Luke is right in placing them there; and five out of the seven in his third group belong to the Passion Week. This confirms the conclusion, which other facts warrant, that in Galilee Jesus was trying to make men understand the nature of His kingdom; in Peraea He was seeking by winning invitations to draw them into the kingdom; and in the last week of His life He was pronouncing the sentence of doom on the nation because it had refused to accept the kingdom and the king. Among the Peraean parables are those of the prodigal son, the lost sheep, the lost coin, the good Samaritan, the importunate friend, the great supper, the Pharisee and publican. It is these and teachings of this sort that make Luke pre-eminently the gracious, tender Gospel. The marked evangelistic tone of this period may have been caused by the shadow of the cross. The heart of Jesus, as He drew near the hour of His supreme sacrifice, yearned to make men realize the love of the Father. And while His words were usually addressed to the multitude, they were doubtless specially intended for the disciples themselves, to teach them that love is the impelling power of all divine work, and that only by self-sacrifice could their own lives, like the life of their Master, be made truly redemptive.

#### 4. The Feast of Dedication.

The feast of Dedication, which lasted eight days, began on the twenty-fifth of Chislev, or about the end

of December. Some think that our Christmas was derived from it, though this is not probable. It was instituted, 164 B.C., by Judas Maccabæus in commemoration of the purification and rededication of the temple the previous year, after the horrible desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C. It was, therefore, a patriotic feast,—a Jewish Fourth of July. It was sometimes called the Feast of Lights because the temple and the houses were illuminated. Since it was kept everywhere through the land, comparatively few Jews went up to Jerusalem for it; but that Jesus should go up was in accordance with His plan to frequent Jerusalem during this final year.

In studying this visit two critical questions have first to be considered. One concerns the time of the miracle of the man born blind; was it at the Feast of Tabernacles, or at this feast, or in the period between the two? The last is most unlikely,—the hostility was too great for Jesus to linger near Jerusalem; the first is possible, but has nothing to support it except that John tells the story immediately after telling the incidents at Tabernacles. The fact that Dedication was the Feast of Lights makes the miracle with its lesson, “I am the light of the world” (John 9:5), most appropriate for this feast; and the reading of some old manuscripts,—“at that time was the feast” (10:22),—supports this view. The other critical question concerns the order of the narrative. As we have already noticed there are reasons for thinking that the text of John has in some way suffered disarrangement. In the present instance the passage 10:1-18 seems properly to come directly after 10:22-29, in which case 10:19-21 becomes the fitting conclusion of the previous chapter. Also the passage 8:12-20 would be much more intelligible, if

it were placed after 9:41, as a part of Jesus' discussion of the miracle with the Pharisees.

This time Jesus brought the Twelve with Him to Jerusalem, that they might realize both the hostility of the rulers and also their impotence to harm Him against His will. The experience would be good training for Passion Week. He announced His presence by opening the eyes of a man born blind, doing it on the Sabbath with an outward act of healing, and sending him publicly with the clay on his eyes to wash at the pool of Siloam. The Pharisees in an official examination of the man tried to discredit the miracle and the one who wrought it; but his honest obstinacy baffled them. At last in rage they cast him out as a hardened sinner who to his other sins had added belief in Jesus, and should be excommunicated. This examination took place, we may suppose, in the temple. And when the poor fellow was passing out under strict guard of the Pharisees, as an accursed creature to whom no one must speak, Jesus hastened to him and put the question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of Man?", i.e., Are you cast out for believing on me? The man knew so little about Jesus and His claims that he thought here was a further teaching which he would gladly accept. So he asked, "Who is he, sir, that I might believe?", and received the answer, "Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee." Then Jesus, naturally, was drawn into discussion by the escorting Pharisees, some of whom went back with Him to the treasury where the others were still assembled; and the argument over His statement that He was the light of the world was carried to a point that threatened His arrest; "Yet no man took him because his hour was not yet come" (John 8:12-20).



The general attitude of hostility at this feast was much the same as at Tabernacles. The rulers demanded that Jesus should tell them plainly whether He was the Messiah (John 10:24). This was a snare to catch Him. If they could get from Him an open declaration that He was the Messiah, then His claim could be brought before the Sanhedrin where it certainly would be pronounced false, and He would be punished accordingly. The statement with which His answer ended, "I and the Father are one" (10:30), was understood to be an assertion of divinity, and roused their horror to the point of stoning Him; yet the words with which He supported it left them unable to justify such an act. An attempt was made now to arrest Him; but "he went forth out of their hand." Doubtless He spent His nights outside the city,—perhaps at Bethany which is only two miles away, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives; and this may be the time when the incident of Mary and Martha took place (Luke 10:38-42). When He left Jerusalem at the end of the week, it was with full conviction that nothing more could be done there; and the Twelve were of the opinion that to return thither meant death (John 11:8-16).

After Dedication Jesus went across the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing when he pointed out Jesus to the first disciples (10:40; 1:28),—the place where the work now so nearly ended was begun. Is it fanciful to see in this act something of the same purpose and feeling that similar acts have in our own lives? When our life-work is closing, and we are in the mood for retrospect, we turn instinctively to the place where that life-work began. So Jesus in these last days came back to the place where He had gathered His first

disciples, and had entered hopefully upon His public ministry. And as He abode there His thoughts, and also the thoughts of the disciples, must have been busy with all that intervened between that earlier day and now. The retrospect was not cheering; nevertheless an unexpected gleam of sunshine appeared. John was dead, but his work was not the utter failure most men counted it. The testimony of John to Jesus was remembered here, and bore the fruit the Baptist desired. As Jesus tarried, "many came to him; and they said, John, indeed, did no sign, but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true; and many believed on him there" (10:41-42).

### 5. The Raising of Lazarus.

The sickness and death of Lazarus, with the appeal from the two sisters, brought Jesus and the Twelve back again to the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, and called forth His most impressive miracle. We notice that the miracles He wrought under the direct notice of the rulers form a steadily increasing manifestation of divine power. The undescribed miracles of the first Passover seem to have been simple acts of healing; a year later, at Pentecost, came the notable miracle of curing the man who had an infirmity of thirty-eight years' standing; then at Dedication was the opening of the eyes of the blind man,—a miracle of which the poor man himself said (and he was speaking concerning a matter which he had reason to study carefully), "Since the world began it was not heard that any one opened the eyes of one that was *born* blind"; and now Lazarus, who had lain four days in the tomb,—a period beyond the limit of time during which, as the Jews believed, the spirit hovered near

the grave,—was raised from the dead. We may not say that this was the greatest of His miracles, for we cannot measure miracles; but it certainly had the greatest effect. It kindled enthusiasm and a measure of faith in the beholders, which bore fruit on Palm Sunday (12:17 f.); and this enthusiasm and faith wakened the Sadducees to the danger of a popular insurrection led by Jesus, and made them unite with the Pharisees in seeking His death, because an insurrection might result (as that of 66 A.D. actually did) in the destruction of the temple, the end of their power, and the loss of such liberties as the Romans were granting the nation (11:47 f.).

Before the Sadducees were thus aroused to the necessity of putting Jesus out of the way, the Pharisees had been able to do little, because they were a minority in the Sanhedrin. Now, if He should be brought before that body, the result was certain. The raising of Lazarus, therefore, was the preliminary to the crucifixion. Was not this the main meaning of Jesus' words when He said that the sickness which caused the death of Lazarus was "for the glory of God, that the Son of Man may be glorified thereby"? (11:4). In John's reproduction of Jesus' teachings, the word "glorify" is closely akin in meaning to "crucify" (e.g., 12:23; 17:1). It is true that the miracle was a fresh manifestation of the power and sympathy of Jesus, and thus revealed to the multitude the glory of God (11:40-42); but a greater glory was involved in it,—the glory which Caiaphas unwittingly proclaimed and John interprets,—"that Jesus should die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he might also gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad" (11:49-53).

The question naturally arises, Why are the Synop-  
tists wholly silent about this miracle? Some answer  
it by saying that they wrote when Lazarus was still  
alive, and the hostility against him (12:10) had not  
ceased; therefore, out of consideration for his safety  
the miracle was omitted. This seems far-fetched. A  
better answer is that the plan of the Synoptists was to  
make no mention of any work in Judea, till they came  
to the last week. Luke does tell of Jesus' visit to the  
home of Mary and Martha; but he hides the fact that  
they dwelt in Bethany (10:38). Why this plan was  
adopted we can only explain in part. There was so  
much that might be told, and so little that could be  
told; the work in Judea was so unfruitful; the account  
of the last week was given so fully,—these are sug-  
gestions of an explanation. When we realize that if  
John had not written, we should know nothing about  
the raising of Lazarus or about most of the other  
miracles related in the Fourth Gospel, it sets us think-  
ing of the "many other signs" not recorded in any  
Gospel (John 20:30), which would be so precious had  
they been preserved.

## 6. The Last Journey to Jerusalem.

The increased danger caused by the raising of  
Lazarus made Jesus withdraw this time not across the  
Jordan but into complete retirement. He went with  
the Twelve to Ephraim, which is usually thought to  
have been a small town about five miles east of Bethel,  
"near to the wilderness" (John 11:54). His stay  
here was only a few weeks at the utmost. The feast  
of the Passover in 29 A.D. came about the middle of  
March. When the time drew near, and the highways  
along the Jordan, plainly visible from His retreat, were

filled with pilgrims bound for Jerusalem, Jesus came down from the hills with His disciples, and joined them. They journeyed to Jericho where two important incidents occurred. One was the conversion of Zacchaeus, a chief publican, which is noteworthy as being one of the few instances where Jesus is reported to have wrought the kind of work which His disciples later on were to accomplish continually. Here was a social outcast, sought out by Him, convicted of sin, showing sincere penitence by reparation of his wrongdoing, and entering with joy upon a new life. It was a spiritual miracle, far more wonderful than any physical one; and it was of the kind that Jesus had in mind when He said to His disciples after the Last Supper, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father" (John 14:12). The other incident was the healing of the blind beggar, Bartimaeus, as he sat by the wayside. It was done in the presence of a crowd of pilgrims, and aroused much excitement. Jesus had apparently been forced into hiding through fear of the rulers, and it was debated whether He would dare come to the feast (John 11:56); now, appearing most unexpectedly, He places Himself at the head of these Peraean and Galilean pilgrims, and heals the blind man who hails Him as "the son of David," i.e., the Messianic king. Nothing could more quickly kindle their hope that at last He was going to claim for Himself the throne of His great ancestor, and drive the Romans from the sacred land. This miracle helps to explain the "swelling tide of popular enthusiasm" which reached its height at the triumphal entry. Keim, as we have noticed, though he usually rejects miracles, accepts this



one because the course of later events is inexplicable without it.

From Jericho, Jesus went on to Bethany, a distance of about fifteen miles, and an ascent of nearly three thousand feet. John says that Jesus arrived there "six days before the Passover" (12:1), namely, on Saturday, if the Passover came,—as we shall see reason to think it did,—on Friday of the following week. Many scholars hold that Jesus would not travel on Saturday,—the Jewish Sabbath; and so they make the day of His arrival Friday, and use this statement of John as an argument that the Passover was on Thursday. But He was not strict in Sabbath observance; and a short journey on the Sabbath was allowed even by the most strict. If He had come up with the pilgrims on Friday, it would have been hard to avoid a triumphal entry on that day; for they were greatly excited by what He had done in Jericho. It is simpler to suppose that He allowed the pilgrims to leave Him behind, thinking He planned to spend the Sabbath at Jericho; and then, later in the day, He started with the Twelve, spent the night at some point on the road, and came to Bethany early on Saturday. This would secure for Him one quiet day, the last possible, with His friends; for the news of His arrival would not be sent to Jerusalem until the Sabbath was ended.

His friends in Bethany showed their joy at His coming by a feast held in the house of Simon the leper,—whoever he may have been. Probably this was on the afternoon of Saturday; for the Jewish Sabbath, with all its restrictions, was a day specially marked by feasting. It was here that Jesus was anointed by Mary. The incident is told to explain the later conduct of Judas, and to record Mary's prophetic act and Jesus'

notable words about it. That Jesus by going to Jerusalem would be exposed to the greatest peril was known to Mary through her many friends in the city; and that He was ready to lay down His life in fulfilment of His mission was a teaching she had comprehended when others failed to do so. The puzzling words, "Let her alone:—that she might keep it against the day of my burial" (John 12:6), perhaps indicate that this ointment had been purchased by her with the thought that soon she might need it for His burial, though now she seized the unexpected opportunity to offer it while He still was alive. Mark, whom Matthew follows, does not mention Mary by name, and says that the ointment was poured upon the head of Jesus. David Smith has an interesting explanation of these variations. He adopts the old theory that Mary of Bethany was Mary Magdalene, and that one chapter in her history is given in Luke 7:37 f.,—the story of the harlot who anointed Christ's feet and wiped them with the hair of her head. And he thinks that now, saved by Christ and dwelling once more at home, she showed her grateful remembrance by repeating the former act. Peter in telling the story of the feast, which Mark reproduces, would hide all this, partly to shield Mary, but still more to avoid the base slanders that might arise if he told of Jesus' loving intimacy with a woman who had been what Mary once was. So he told only of anointing the head (a usual act), and omitted the wiping with her hair, since to appear in public with loose hair was a well-known mark of a harlot. Still he did not succeed entirely in hiding the matter, for he said that the Twelve or some of the guests "had indignation among themselves"—and "murmured against her,"—a much stronger feeling than would be aroused

by mere extravagance, but one appropriate to an act that advertised a shameful past history. All this is ingenious; but there really is nothing to identify Mary Magdalene with the woman who was a sinner; and if there were, we would hesitate much to suppose that she was Mary of Bethany. Still we note that, if the identification with Mary Magdalene is correct, she seems to have been the foremost of those who watched by the cross as Jesus died; and she was the leader of those who first came to the tomb on Easter morning to care for the body of her Lord (Mark 16: 1).

## XVI

### THE PASSION WEEK

**E**ACH of the four Gospels has a very full account of the closing week of Jesus' life; it forms nearly one-third of the whole story. This is natural, because it is the most impressive part, and would be specially remembered in Jerusalem where the oral gospel originated; and also because it is the most important part, and was emphasized by the apostles in their evangelistic preaching (I Cor. 15:3 f.). We can arrange the incidents by days with considerable certainty; the nights seem to have been passed in the open on the Mount of Olives, perhaps in the vicinity of Bethany (Mark 11:11, 19), perhaps in Gethsemane (Luke 21:37; John 18:2). It was not safe for Jesus to stay in the city nor even in the house of a friend at Bethany. His enemies were seeking to arrest Him away from the multitude; and there were plenty of spies who would report His lodging-place.

#### 1. The Triumphal Entry,—Sunday.

The triumphal entry should be compared with the feeding of the five thousand, when the Galileans would make Jesus king. There is nothing to indicate that He deliberately planned a public demonstration in the one case any more than in the other. The multitude who had come up from Jericho to Jerusalem on Friday brought the news that the son of David, whose cure

of Bartimaeus they had witnessed, was on His way to the feast. In return they were told of the miracle of Lazarus, and of the Sanhedrin's decision that Jesus should be put to death. When word came that He already had reached Bethany, some hurried out to the little town that same Saturday evening, eager to see Lazarus as well as Jesus (John 12:9). The excitement increased, fed by the report that now the chief priests were also plotting the death of Lazarus. And on Sunday afternoon a crowd of the pilgrims set out for Bethany to be the body-guard of Jesus and bring Him into the city. Meanwhile, other pilgrims who left Jericho early this same morning, and previous to leaving heard that Jesus had gone in advance of them to claim His throne, were now filing by Bethany. The unconcerted meeting of these two bodies formed the multitude that thronged the road before and behind Him as he made His entry. Notice that they were mainly Galileans and Peraeans; and their action had more of a local than of a national character. They would boldly escort the King of Israel to the city, set Him in defiance before His Jewish and Roman enemies, and wait confidently for the miracles by which He would establish Himself upon the throne. This was their programme, so far as their hasty action had a programme; and in carrying it out, they placed before Jesus again one of the temptations of the wilderness.

When the people on the shores of the lake sought to make Jesus king, He strenuously opposed them; now He made no resistance. He was in truth their king; let them hail Him as "the son of David" here in the sacred city. Nevertheless, there must be no misunderstanding what kind of a king He claimed to be,—one who, as Zechariah had foretold, was "just and having



salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9). Whatever false expectations the multitude might cherish as they cried "Hosanna! Blessed be the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord," nothing in His words or manner should seem to support them. This explains why He sent two of His disciples to borrow from some unnamed friend the humble beast, the symbol of peace, on which He rode; after the manner of the Old Testament prophets He would act out His message. Nevertheless, as John points out (12:16), even the Twelve did fail to understand the significance of His act; they were so filled with anticipation of the overthrow of their enemies, that they failed to perceive they were bringing in the Prince of Peace.

The triumphal entry had different meanings for the different actors engaged in it. For the enemies of Jesus it was a revelation of His power and their own impotence. As they looked forth from the city walls, and watched the throng escorting Him around the slope of Olivet, the Pharisees said to one another, "Behold, how ye prevail nothing: lo, the world is gone after him" (John 12:19). For the people, who by spontaneous impulse gave Him this royal reception, it was, though they knew it not, a manifestation of the same spirit that, a few decades later, would cause the horrible war against the Romans and against each other, ending in the utter destruction of Jerusalem. A vision of its impending doom filled the mind of Jesus when He came to a point in the road where the beautiful city stood revealed; and this forced from His lips a wailing cry and words of lamentation which broke in strangely upon the shouts of rejoicing (Luke 19:41 f.). For the disciples it was the sudden realiza-

tion of their fondest dream. Almost as if by magic all the terrors that had appalled them (Mark 10: 32) were dissipated; the hatred of Jerusalem seemed changed to glad recognition; the years of lonely wandering, hardship, contempt and struggle were ended; joy thrilled their hearts; triumph was sure at last; the kingdom was their Lord's. But for Jesus Himself the entry was not a triumph but a defeat, not glory but humiliation,—a fresh revelation of the failure of His ministry. He had failed to win these people, though they seemed so wholly devoted. Today they were shouting "Hosanna!" because they thought He was about to satisfy their greed for power and thirst for vengeance; tomorrow, when they found He would do none of these things, they would even more loudly cry, "Crucify, crucify!"

On wound the procession, across the valley of the Kedron, up to the gates, through the streets; and at its coming all the city was thrown into commotion. Eager faces looked forth from the housetops; excited questions passed from lip to lip: "Who is this?" they asked; and the answer came back, "This is the prophet, Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee" (Matt. 21: 10-11). Still onward it moved to the courts of the temple,—the proper place for the Messianic king to make a royal proclamation. Then the excited multitude waited His order to drive out the Roman guards, overwhelm Pilate in his palace, seize the city and declare the yoke of Rome broken. A single word would have set a revolution in motion; but He would not speak the word. He could not teach them in their excited state; to work miracles would but increase the excitement; there really was nothing He could do, and the day was drawing towards its close; so after a

calm survey of all things (Mark 11:11), He went back across the Mount of Olives towards Bethany, leaving them disgusted with His seeming cowardice and weakness.

## 2. The Day of Suspense,—Monday.

When Jesus led the Twelve out unto Bethany on Sunday evening, they doubtless found shelter and food at some friend's home; but He spent the night alone on the hillside in communion with God. We infer this from His practice after days of great spiritual stress, and from the fact that "on the morrow when they were come out from Bethany, he hungered" (Mark 11:12). The story of the cursing of the fig tree that morning is a puzzling one. In an unusually favorable location a fig tree might put forth leaves thus early in the year; and, since the fruit-buds of a fig tree develop before the leaf-buds start, a tree thus having leaves ought to show green figs. But that Jesus expected to find edible figs fully two months before the very earliest ripe figs are due is hard to believe. Perhaps the expectation is simply an inference of the apostles from His investigation of the tree, since they knew He had fasted all night. The curse upon the tree was pronounced, not because there was no ripe fruit, but because there was no fruit whatever,— "nothing but leaves." The pretentious tree was putting all its energy into leaf-bearing instead of fruit, and deserved the sentence of doom. Many would explain the whole incident as a parable transformed into an actual event; and they point to the fact that Luke omits it, but gives a parable of a barren fig tree (13:6-9). Certainly it has the value of a parable; though the evangelist does not seem to per-

ceive this, and treats it rather as a marvel. The fig tree, through some special advantage of location, had pushed far beyond its fellows, and by its foliage promised fruit but was barren. This fitly typified Israel. And the doom of both was destruction because of such profession without performance. The main objection to taking the incident as only a parable is the teaching about the power of faith, which follows it and would not be called forth by a parable; but Matthew and Luke give similar teachings in other connections, and this may originally have belonged elsewhere.

The Synoptic gospels put the cleansing of the temple on this morning. That the old abuses had reappeared can hardly be questioned; but that Jesus should repeat the act with which He opened His Judean ministry is improbable. It would now be simply a useless attempt to purify that upon which He had pronounced sentence of destruction; the traders would not be taken off their guard a second time; and it would involve a needless danger of arrest just when He was moving with caution that He might eat the Passover with His disciples before the end should come. Perhaps the reason why the Synoptists tell of the cleansing now is because, having mentioned no previous visit of Jesus to Jerusalem, they have had no opportunity to tell it earlier, and the story must be told to explain the testimony of the false witnesses at His trial and the taunts of those who passed by His cross (Mark 14:58; 15:29). Yet, we notice that they omit the special words (John 2:19) which were garbled to form a charge against Him.

Monday was a day of suspense rather than of conflict. The rulers were anxiously waiting the action of

Jesus and the people; but Jesus quietly took up His usual work of teaching and healing in the temple court, and the people, though still attentive and expectant, showed no special approval of what He was doing,—it was not what they wanted. Already the enthusiasm of yesterday had disappeared; the children, remembering it, raised again the cry of “Hosanna to the son of David”; but no older person joined with them, and the priests gained courage to protest. The enemies of Jesus had not yet recovered from the consternation of the triumphal entry; but when He again retired to the Mount of Olives, they felt that the danger of a great popular movement in His favor was ended.

### 3. The Day of Conflict,—Tuesday.

By Tuesday the rulers were ready to confront Jesus squarely. They began the contest as soon as He appeared in the temple, and carried it on unceasingly through the day. Monday had shown them that He would continue His customary work of teaching. In this work He must be met and decoyed into some statement that would justify His arrest and condemnation, or at least would completely alienate the sympathies of the people.

First, the representatives of the Sanhedrin came with the direct question, “By what authority doest thou these things? or who gave thee this authority to do these things?” (Mark 11:28). This called the attention of all to the fact that the Sanhedrin was the proper body to pass judgment upon Messianic claims. If Jesus refused to recognize this, His refusal would prejudice the people against Him; but if He acknowledged the authority of the Sanhedrin, then He must



submit, when it proceeded to pronounce Him an impostor. He escaped the snare by demanding that first they answer a question of His, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?" Though it put them in a dilemma, and forced them to retire in confusion, saying, "We know not," the demand was a fair one. Before the Sanhedrin passed upon the claims of the Messiah, it should pass upon those of His forerunner; if it was not competent to do this, it certainly was not competent to do the greater thing. Moreover, Christ's response went to the very root of their unbelief. If they were honest seekers after truth, they would have accepted John, even as now they would accept Him whom John foretold, endeavoring in this way to throw Him off His guard.

Next, with many hypocritical words of compliment, the Pharisees and Herodians asked Him to act as umpire in one of their standing disputes, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar?" If He said "No," the Herodians, who favored Caesar, would denounce Him to the Roman authorities; and He would receive severe punishment as one who stirred up sedition. If He said "Yes," the Pharisees would use this with the people as positive proof that He was not the Messiah. His well-known answer does not (as many assert) lay down the principle of the separation of church and state. It simply points out that so long as the Jews avail themselves of Caesar's benefits,—his coinage, his army and the rest,—they are stopped from refusing to pay Caesar his dues; and then it raises the thought to the higher level of the benefits we receive from God and our dues to Him. They had asked a petty question; they received a profound reply. "And they were not able to take hold of the

saying before the people; and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace" (Luke 20:26).

Now the Sadducees came forward to try a bout with Him. Ecclesiastical and political weapons had been used in vain; they would break a lance theological. Jesus and the Pharisees taught the doctrine of a resurrection, which they denied. They would make both Him and the Pharisees laughing-stocks by ridiculing the teaching. Accordingly they propounded one of their pet problems. "Suppose that seven brothers have in succession the same wife,—in the resurrection whose shall she be? Each of the seven has equal claims; will she sit in Abraham's bosom surrounded by this circle of husbands,—the envy of all beholders,—or how shall the fortunate possessor of the family heirloom be determined?" The question was intentionally coarse, scoffing and calculated to raise a laugh from the crowd. Christ's answer was on an entirely different plane. Disregarding the special problem as frivolous, He pointed out that their difficulties concerning the resurrection arose from their gross, earthly conceptions of the heavenly life. And their great argument that a future life was not revealed to Moses was false. When God said, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob," the very form of the statement showed that the patriarchs still live. God's love is the seal of immortality; for He certainly will not allow death to rob Him of His own. From the eternal nature of God, the relationship He forms with man must be eternal. The answer not only silenced the questioners, but by its novelty and grandeur called forth a murmur of applause from the bystanders. And one thoughtful hearer was impelled to ask in all seriousness the opinion of Jesus, as of a teacher whose

judgment was most valuable, concerning the problem often and earnestly debated, "What sort of a commandment is the first of all?" (Mark 12:28).

Thus each of these attacks failed; and yet indirectly they accomplished their purpose. They made it increasingly evident to the people that Jesus was not the Messiah they desired. Above all, His final refusal to countenance a revolt against the Roman authorities could not be forgiven. "His fate was sealed. Deserted by the people, He would certainly fall into the hands of His enemies; from that very day the populace would turn against Him" (Weiss).

Jesus' own part in the day's conflict was not merely to stand on the defensive; never was He more bold and terrible in His direct attack. In return for the problems given Him, He propounded the problem of David's relation to the Messiah as set forth in Psalm 110; and forced the Pharisees to confess they could not solve it. He told his sternest parables,—those of the two sons, the wicked husbandmen, the wedding guests; and He told them in such a way that His enemies could not fail to understand He was speaking of them. And finally He broke forth into denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, pronouncing upon them a series of woes more appalling than the severest imprecations of the old prophets. Possibly these were not all spoken at this time, but are grouped in the source from which Matthew took them. They reveal a side of Christ's nature that we are prone to ignore in our emphasis of His gentleness, patience and love. We think of Him as the Lamb of God; here we are forced to remember, what too often we forget, that there is such a thing as "the wrath of the Lamb,"—a wrath made more significant because of the love

which permeates it. From these words we get, says Muirhead, "the impression that to Jesus' mind there was no sin in the world worth speaking about compared with the sin of His own nation. They bear the fate and the guilt of the rest of the world. They bar the entrance of others into the kingdom. Children of hell, they draw their proselytes into closer folds of flame. Murderers and children of murderers they bear the guilt of all the 'righteous blood shed upon the earth.' And Jesus did not speak of these things as a mere speculator, or even as a prophet like Jeremiah in whose bones the word burned. He spoke as one who saw and felt the power of murder and hell let loose upon Himself."

At the close of this day we may put the request of the Greeks,—the only incident John has recorded of all that took place between the triumphal entry and the Last Supper. It was not unusual for Gentiles to come and offer sacrifices at the temple. Indeed, a daily sacrifice was offered "in behalf of the emperor and the Roman people," for which the emperor paid. There were certain Greeks now among the temple worshippers; and to Philip they stated their desire to meet Jesus, evidently not from curiosity but from a craving for His intimate teaching. Such an approach at such an hour stirred Jesus most deeply. It was the voice of the great outer world calling for His salvation. To grant these Greeks an audience now was out of the question; the crowd and the hostile atmosphere made quiet, earnest conversation impossible. More than this, the message they needed was not yet ready; the gospel, which would be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,—to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16), must be

completed by His death. What the request of the Greeks signified to Jesus is indicated by His answer, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified; verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit" (John 12:23 f.). The cry of the world, "We would see Jesus," He recognized to be the summons to the cross.

The passage which follows (John 12:27 f.) belongs to the inmost spiritual history of Jesus. As John omits all account of the institution of the Eucharist but places a sacramental teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum (6:35 f.), so also he omits all account of Gethsemane but describes at this hour a similar experience. The parallel between the agony in the Garden and the agony here is most exact: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death. . . . Father, remove this cup from me. . . . Not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:34-36), and "Now is my soul troubled. . . . Father, save me from this hour. . . . Father, glorify thy name" (John 12:27); and the disciples in the Garden who slumber oblivious, or drowsily listen to the prayer of their Master, are like the bystanders here who with various degrees of receptiveness hear the voice from heaven. It does not follow, however, that one of the two accounts must be rejected. In the ministry of Jesus there must have been more than one hour, when in anguish of spirit He cried to the Father and received a response that brought strength and peace. The voice from heaven by which the answer was now revealed to others is the same as that at the baptism and the transfiguration; and the explicit statement that to some it seemed to be only thunder and to others the voice of an angel



speaking an unknown tongue confirms the conclusion that here and in the previous instances the message was to the soul and not to the outward ear. This revelation of the spiritual attitude of Jesus as He approached death was for the sake of those, a handful of disciples, who would be helped by it (John 12: 30). Nevertheless, neither the transfiguration nor this hour gave them a message sufficient to support their faith when the horror of a crucified Messiah was squarely before them.

Thus ended this great day of conflict in which Jesus again and again had met and mastered His enemies. But His words of bitter condemnation of them were likewise words of sentence upon Himself. They swept away all possibility of reconciliation, all feeling of pity on the part of those denounced. In the rage excited, all else was forgotten save the thirst for blood. Jesus must die at once; and the more horrible and ignominious His death, the sweeter would be the revenge for such insults. It was with full recognition of this fact that He left the city at the close of the day. Yet, as He looked at the future, His thought was for His disciples rather than for Himself. And this shaped His discourse that Tuesday evening as He sat with them on the Mount of Olives over against the temple, and gave them instruction and warning for the days when they must bear witness and meet tribulation without Him.

#### 4. The Day of Retirement,—Wednesday.

It seems probable that Jesus remained in seclusion from Tuesday night until the supper on Thursday evening. Both His friends and His foes were now in such a state of mind that further work in Jeru-

saalem would be unprofitable, if not impossible. And, though the favor of the multitude had hitherto protected Him in daytime, special care must be taken that nothing might prevent His eating the Passover with the Twelve. Moreover, He needed this time of quiet, not only for spiritual preparation for what was to come, but even for physical preparation. The strain of Tuesday had been tremendous; the strain of Thursday night would be far greater; He must have an interval of rest. How and where He spent it, we are not told.

It was this Wednesday of inactivity that gave Judas the opportunity to go to the city without his companions, and seek an interview with the enemies of Jesus. He made his way to the palace of Caiaphas, where he found the leaders gathered for consultation as to how they could bring about the death of the man who had denounced them. Assassination was and is a favorite Oriental method of removing a powerful enemy; but Jesus' secrecy and the body-guard of the Twelve made this impossible. If He could be arrested, it might be easy to persuade Pilate to put Him to death; but an open arrest was likely to cause a tumult, because the friends of Jesus would interfere; and a secret arrest seemed impossible, because Jesus went out of the city at nightfall, and no one knew where to find Him. The coming of Judas with an offer to betray his Master removed their difficulties, and made their hearts glad with unholy joy.

## XVII

### THE LAST SUPPER AND GETHSEMANE

THE public ministry began with a feast, at which Jesus was a guest,—the supper in Cana; it closed with a feast, at which He was the host,—the supper in Jerusalem. At the first He manifested to His disciples His glory by changing water into wine; at the last He manifested to them His grace by changing wine into the perpetual symbol of His blood. How important and precious this last supper was to Him is shown by His statement, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15), which hints of hours when He feared that it might be impossible, of prayer and painstaking preparation for it. The desire is explained when we consider what "the Lord's Supper" has been to the Christian world. The history of the sacrament is one with the history of Christian faith and life. Whenever superstition has hedged the table about with terror, and ascribed to the elements magical virtues,—whenever rationalism had degraded the sacrament to a bit of Oriental symbolism, an interesting historical relic,—whenever license has destroyed the reverence of communicants, and made communion a trivial matter, the church has been moribund and the gospel has been perverted. And a return to the simplicity that is in Christ to the faith that accepts His salvation, and to

soberness of Christian living, has always gone hand in hand with a renewed appreciation of the value of the sacrament.

### 1. Was the Last Supper the Passover?

Jesus ate the Last Supper with His disciples on Thursday evening, and was crucified on Friday. Such seems to be the clear statement of the evangelists; though a few scholars, accepting Matthew 12:40 as a prophecy with a literal fulfillment, argue that Wednesday evening was the time of the supper, and Thursday, the crucifixion. A question more important and causing much more division of opinion is whether the regular Jewish Passover meal came that year on Thursday evening or on Friday evening,—in other words, was the supper which Jesus ate with the Twelve on Thursday evening a Passover meal or not?

The Passover was the oldest of the Jewish feasts; it celebrated the deliverance out of Egypt, and was also a feast of the first ripe grain. Strictly speaking, it lasted only one day;—but it was followed by a seven days' "feast of unleavened bread," which is so closely identified with it, that the whole eight days are usually called the feast of the Passover. The great event of the feast was the Passover meal; and the main feature of this meal was the lamb, which must be brought to the temple, and killed by the worshippers, and its blood poured before the altar by the priests, between "the two evenings," i.e., between the beginning of the sun's decline and sunset,—say from 3:00 to 6:00 P.M.,—on Nisan 14. It was then roasted at home, and must be eaten the same night before midnight. This night, according to Jewish reckoning which makes a day begin at sunset, would be the beginning of Nisan 15.

The company must be sufficient to eat the whole lamb,—not less than ten nor more than twenty persons. In later centuries the feast was minutely regulated both as to the various articles of food and the order and manner of eating them; but we are not sure that these regulations existed in the first century.

Was the supper which Jesus ate on Thursday evening this Passover meal? The question interests us because it is involved in another question far more important, viz.: Did Jesus at a Passover meal transform the Jewish feast into the Christian sacrament, or did He die as the Lamb of God at the very hour when the Jews were slaying their paschal lambs? It might seem that the answer could be found by simply turning to the calendar, and determining whether that Thursday evening was the beginning of Nisan 14 or of Nisan 15. But this expedient fails us, partly because we are not sure of the year when Christ died, and partly because,—even if we agree on the year 29 A.D.,—ancient reckoning of time was so uncertain that we cannot be sure to a day just when Nisan 15 of that year came. Any conclusion has to be based wholly upon the gospel record; and, on the surface, the account of the Synoptists does not seem to agree with that of John.

Taking the Synoptists alone we should conclude that the meal was the Passover: they plainly say so (Mark 14:12, 14, 16 and parallels). Still we notice that they tell of acts performed between Thursday evening and Friday evening that are forbidden on Nisan 15, which was treated as a Sabbath with all the Sabbath restrictions, no matter on what day of the week it came. E.g., the temple guard and Peter carry arms (Mark 14:43, 50); Simon of Cyrene comes from the country, i.e., from the field where apparently he has



been working (Mark 15:21); Joseph of Arimathaea buys a linen cloth (Mark 15:46); the women prepare spices and ointments (Luke 23:56). Above all it is difficult to believe that members of the Sanhedrin would deliberately desecrate the day of the Passover by giving themselves to the arrest, trial and crucifixion of any one, no matter what the provocation. On the other hand, from the account in John we should conclude that the Last Supper was on the evening before the Passover, i.e., that this Thursday evening was the beginning of Nisan 14 instead of Nisan 15. He expressly dates it "before the feast of the Passover" (13:1); the disciples think Judas is going to buy something for the feast, though buying and selling would be debarred on the Passover (13:29); the rulers shun defilement that will keep them from eating the Passover (18:28); compare also 19:14, 31.

Various ways of reconciling the Synoptists and John have been devised. Formerly the tendency was to follow the Synoptists in regarding the evening as Nisan 15; now it is rather the reverse. Certainly John ought to know; and in this, as in some other instances (e.g., in making Christ's ministry begin in Judea), he may be correcting the Synoptists. May it not be, however, that both are right, owing to the fact that it was permissible to anticipate the regular date of the Passover, and eat the meal on Nisan 14? There is no record of such permission; but it would seem to have been absolutely necessary. Josephus says (Wars 6:9:3) that, a few years later, the number of lambs slain at one Passover was 256,500. If at the temple they killed three hundred a minute, it would take over fourteen hours to dispose of this number. Undoubtedly Josephus greatly exaggerates; but we see that in any

case the time of killing the lambs must have been extended beyond three hours of one afternoon. So, too, some extension of time must be allowed to provide places for cooking and eating the meal. We know that in order to make it possible to keep the law requiring the lamb to be eaten in Jerusalem, the rabbis agreed that all the suburbs as far out as Bethany might be considered parts of the city; but even then there would not be kitchens and dining-rooms enough for the multitude to use in one day. Very possibly one reason why Jesus ate the Passover a day in advance was that His host might have the room for his own use at the regular time. If Jesus thus anticipated the day, we may hold both that He ate the Passover meal, though not at the regular time, and that He died on the cross at the regular hour for killing the Passover lamb.

## 2. The Incidents of the Supper.

The supper was eaten in the house of a disciple (Mark 14: 14); and from the fact that Mark alone tells of the young man who followed the band that came to arrest Jesus (14: 51) we surmise it was the house of Mark's family (cf. Acts 12: 12). Since Jesus was to be in the city after nightfall, there was need to keep the place a secret; otherwise the traitor might arrange to have Him arrested there, even before the supper could be eaten. Peter and John could be trusted; but it was best that they should not know whither they were sent until they had left the others. The man bearing a pitcher of water (an unusual sight) could guide them to the home whose hospitality was certain. The two disciples went into the city early in the day, and were busy until nightfall, obtaining,

killing and cooking the lamb, and preparing the supper. At nightfall Jesus came with the rest of the Twelve.

This was the only Passover at which Jesus Himself was the giver of the feast. He seems to have stayed away from the previous Passover; and at the first one in His ministry He and His disciples numbered less than the necessary ten, and must have united with others in the feast. Moreover, this was probably the first time in all their long companionship that He had acted as host to the Twelve at a formal meal. We can understand, then, why the disciples watched eagerly for the order in which He would seat them, and for every detail by which as host He would be compelled for once to indicate His preference among them. The spirit of ambition and jealousy, always ready to awaken, was roused, and marred the feast to which Jesus had so eagerly looked forward. It had to be sharply rebuked both by word and by act. Judas was the chief disturbing factor, and the early part of the meal was occupied with a silent struggle between him and Jesus. From the time they entered the city, he was planning how he could get away to inform the rulers that their victim was now within their grasp. And his whole bearing was one of scarcely concealed insolence and contempt. He seized and held the seat of honor at the table (see Edersheim) which made the others indignant and envious. He looked upon the footwashing, not as a rebuke to the others and an unspoken appeal to himself to turn back from the path he had entered,—a last chance for repentance and forgiveness,—but rather as the crowning proof that the Galilean peasant, who he once expected would become a king, had only the spirit of a peasant and should be

despised. When, as the meal progressed, Jesus said with anguish, "One of you shall betray me," and in consternation the others cried out, "It is not I, is it, Lord?", Judas repeated the words, but with a significant change that veiled a sneer, "It is not I, is it, rabbi?" And when the answer came, "Thou hast said it," he still was neither alarmed nor penitent. It was hopeless to deal with him further, and his presence made spiritual teachings impossible. Let him depart and do his worst. "What thou doest, do quickly" (John 13:27).

It was after Judas had gone out into the night, and peace was restored, that the most significant act of the supper was performed,—the act which accounts for the desire of Jesus to celebrate the feast with His disciples. Mark says, "He took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat, this is my body. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them; and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (Mark 14:22-24). Some scholars deny that Jesus by this act intended to institute the Christian sacrament. "He was not teaching theology nor giving veiled utterance to any mysterious truth concerning His work and person. He had already told them that He must die, and that His death would be in reality a means of blessing to them. He now repeated that prophecy and promise in vivid and impressive symbol" (McGiffert). It is true that if,—as in some of the oldest manuscripts,—Luke 22:19b-20 is omitted, the Gospels contain no injunction to repeat the act in future days: but Paul, whose epistle is earlier than the Gospels, says that Jesus commanded, "This do in re-

membrance of me" (I Cor. 11:24). It is also true that the sacrament would be of little significance to the disciples until after the death of Jesus; but the meaning they found in it later on would really be there from the first, ready to be disclosed when they were able to receive it. Whatever theory of the Eucharist we adopt, the need of some such ceremony to unite His followers with Him and with one another was so evident that we cannot readily believe Jesus made no provision for it. If we deny that He instituted it before His death, we are forced to hold that He taught and enjoined it after His resurrection.

Though John does not tell of the institution of the Eucharist, he does give the wonderful sacramental discourse and prayer that closed the meal. The statement in the earlier part of it (John 14:31), "Arise, let us go hence," has been taken as a proof that the rest of the discourse and the prayer were not in the upper room. Some hold that Jesus went to the temple and finished His words there. This seems most improbable, and is only supported by the fact that over the temple gateway there was a vine wrought of gold which, it is argued, suggested the allegory of the vine and branches. Even though the temple was open and largely deserted at night, it was the center of His enemies; and moreover there was nothing to draw Him thither,—it was not His Father's house but a den of robbers. Others think He spoke the balance of the discourse on the way to Olivet. But this, also, is hard to believe. How could He suitably teach a band of eleven men, and offer prayer, when passing along the street? Undoubtedly it was dangerous to linger in the house; but the discourse was probably not much longer than John records; each word of it would sink



into memory at such an hour. The simplest solution is to change the order of John 14-16, and place the command to depart at the close, and thus before the final prayer.

### 3. Gethsemane.

The place was an enclosed piece of ground (Mark 14:32), that is, a garden (John 18:1), across the Kedron on the Mount of Olives. The name Gethsemane means an oil-press, from which we infer there were olive trees and a press there,—a prosaic name, now wonderfully transformed. Jesus had often tarried there (John 18:2), possibly had spent some of the previous nights there, as Judas knew. Evidently He was making no attempt to flee from the traitor. The time must have been well on towards midnight, and it was the season of the full moon.

When Jesus and His disciples,—now only eleven for the son of perdition was lost,—came to the place, He said, "Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray" (Matt. 26:36). Doubtless He had done the same thing before; but now He took with him Peter, James and John, the three most intimate disciples, as once He had taken them on another night of prayer. The former time it had been to help them: this time it was that their presence and sympathy might be a help to Him. And again He was transfigured before them, but not as before. They saw the Master, who an hour ago had joined in singing the Passover psalms and had said, "Let not your heart be troubled," now begin to be "greatly amazed and sore troubled" (Mark 14:33). Both expressions are significant. The experience into which His soul was entering was such as to overwhelm Him with its unexpectedness; and the sore

trouble it caused was (according to the derivation of the Greek verb used) a feeling of separation, loneliness and longing like that of heart-breaking homesickness. It seemed crushing the very life out of Him, and no human help could avail. He said to the three, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: abide ye here and watch"; and going forward a little, He fell to the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. Such anguish,—so sudden, so overpowering, and to those who watched it so mysterious,—is perhaps beyond our comprehension. Certainly whatever other explanation of it we may adopt, we cannot but reject indignantly the superficial view which sees in it only an overpowering fear of impending physical pain, and a desperate desire to escape death. What can be said of a writer who, in picturing the thoughts that filled Christ's mind at this hour, asks, "Did He remember the clear fountains of Galilee where He was wont to refresh Himself; the vine and fig tree under which He reposed; and the young maidens who perhaps would have consented to love Him? Did He curse the hard destiny which had denied Him the joys conceded to all others? Did He regret His too lofty nature; and, victim of His greatness, did He mourn that He had not remained a simple artisan of Nazareth?" (Renan). If He did, we could not but pronounce Socrates a far greater teacher than Jesus of Nazareth; for the Greek philosopher met death undisturbed and with noble discourse about immortality.

There are some who explain His sorrow by the specially saddening circumstances that surrounded His last hours. One of the Twelve betrayed Him, another denied Him with curses: the rulers prostituted justice

to secure His sentence: the people shouted, "Crucify him!"; the soldiers mocked and tortured Him; the very robber, crucified beside Him, joined in reviling Him,—all the base passions of man held carnival around His cross. If death must come, need it come with such accompaniments? Might not this cup be removed? Such an explanation of Christ's agony and prayer may be true enough; but is it deep enough? Does it do justice to His strength of character and firmness of will? There had been hours before this when a furious storm of hatred raged around Him, and no human friend was at hand: remembering His attitude then, can we believe that now the prospect of the same hatred and lack of human support prostrated Him utterly? No; the cause must be a greater one to produce such an effect.

In the old prophecy of the suffering servant, it is said, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Is. 53:6). That prophecy, we may believe, was now being fulfilled; and the weight of the burden laid upon Him was what crushed Jesus to the ground. How such transfer of the iniquity of us all could be effected is a perennial problem. Theories of the atonement are numerous, each with a measure of truth, but none broad enough for the whole tremendous transaction. The matter remains a mystery. And yet it is not wholly incomprehensible. In each of us, so far as we love our fellow men, there is a power called sympathy by which not only the joys and sorrows of our brother become our own, but even his sins weigh us down with a sense of guilt and shame, as if we ourselves had committed them. And through this same power of sympathy, and only as we employ it, are we able to help our sinning brother towards a righteous

life. Every act of loving sympathy for those who have fallen is in a little measure an atoning sacrifice. Suppose that love were boundless, and sympathy able to enter into the whole orbit of human experience, would not the result somehow be Gethsemane and the redemption of the world?

We cannot study this chapter in the life of Jesus without feeling that the temptation in the wilderness had its parallel in Gethsemane. His ministry may be divided into two parts, one active and one passive,—the years when before the Sanhedrin, the people and the disciples, He uttered gracious words and did mighty works; and the hours when before each of these three He stood in silent suffering and gave no sign of power. Was not Gethsemane the place of preparation and anticipatory struggle for the latter part, even as the wilderness was for the former? Certainly there are striking resemblances between the two. He said after the Last Supper, “The prince of this world cometh,” even as He said concerning the wilderness that there Satan came to Him. In both He went voluntarily to meet the adversary. In both He could have no human companionship or sympathy. In both there was a thrice repeated struggle. And in both the unshaken determination, which carried Him through the conflict, was, “I must do the will of my Father.” To go further and attempt to state the special burden of each of the three seasons of prayer in Gethsemane would be to press beyond what is written. Christ did tell us what each of the three temptations in the wilderness contained; but He has given no similar revelation concerning the Garden. We know merely what drowsy disciples managed to see and hear.

The account, given only by Luke (22:43-44), of

the angelic ministration and of the bloody sweat, seems to be a later insertion, as it is not found in some of the oldest and best manuscripts. If it was in the original, there is no reason why a copyist should omit it; but Luke's account without it is so brief and lacking in emphasis of the struggle of Christ's soul, that a copyist would be inclined to make the addition. Some think that it was an early tradition preserving a trustworthy detail; but it seems more likely a symbolical statement of a spiritual experience of Jesus. We notice that from this passage we get the term "agony," so commonly used in describing Gethsemane.

#### 4. The Arrest.

Though Jesus had foretold that He should be "delivered up," i.e., betrayed, His first announcement that the traitor was one of the Twelve was at the Last Supper. It astonished the others, and must have startled Judas, as showing that Jesus knew of his plot. Yet Judas was not afraid; his feeling towards Jesus now was hatred and contempt. But since the plot was known, he was in haste to carry his part through. It took time for him to find the rulers, and for them to make arrangements for the arrest; but finally they were under way with some of the Roman cohort armed with swords, and some of the temple police armed with clubs, and led by Jewish officers (John 18:3, Mark 14:43). Naturally he would lead them first to the house where he left Jesus, and finding Him no longer there, would go next to Gethsemane. This is confirmed by the incident of Mark 13:51-52. There is no apparent reason why Mark should tell this, unless because it was his personal experience. Aroused from sleep by the coming of the soldiers to his house, and



recognizing from the presence of Judas that treachery was afoot, he hurried after them without stopping to dress, and at Gethsemane narrowly escaped arrest.

Judas had arranged to indicate which was Jesus by going up to Him with a kiss of greeting; and his nervous fear that after all his victim might escape through some mistake is shown by his kissing Him repeatedly when they met (Mark 14:45). The exclamation of Jesus, "Comrade, for what art thou present!" (Matt. 26:50), is a cry of horror at his action; practically the same as "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss!" (Luke 22:48).

Peter remembered Christ's words about a sword (Luke 22:36-38), and thought that now at last He was ready to have His followers fight; accordingly with a rash blow he cut off the ear of a servant of the high-priest. Note that only John tells that Peter was the apostle and Malchus the servant; both had long been dead when John wrote, so to mention their names would do no harm. Only Luke tells of the restoration of the ear; but had not the miracle been performed, the deed of Peter would have been a charge preferred against Jesus and His followers in the trial before the highpriest or Pilate. Christ's words, "Suffer ye thus far" (Luke 22:51) are hard to interpret; possibly they mean, "Give me liberty while I perform the miracle." His rebuke to Peter, His refusal to help Himself, and His "Let these go their way" (John 18:8), were taken by the disciples as a signal to flee. They do not deserve censure for so doing; though they left their Master alone to be led away like a robber taken in the hour of darkness.

## 5. Judas Iscariot.

Exactly why did Judas seek to betray Jesus? Some, wishing to excuse his act and rehabilitate his reputation, have argued that he was simply trying to force the hand of Jesus, supposing that an arrest would compel Him to assert His Messianic claims. "There was, perhaps, in his deed more awkwardness than perversity" (Renan). In proof of this it is pointed out that when he found his plan had failed, he tried in vain to undo it, and then committed suicide. This theory confounds remorse with godly sorrow, and is refuted by Christ's own sentence upon Judas, "Good were it for that man, if he had not been born" (Mark 14:21). The Abyssinian church reckons Pilate a saint because he washed his hands; these men would have us reckon Judas a saint because he hung himself. Some, going to the other extreme, suppose him to have been a devil from the beginning. But if so, would Jesus ever have chosen him to be an apostle; or could he have lived and labored with the apostles all along? "Judas acted like a Satan, but like a Satan who had it in him to be an apostle." His career forms a sad but instructive study in the progress of sin. If he seems blackest of sinners, it is because of the light which surrounded him. And his is the only instance where sin, having run its full course, has received its final sentence from Christ in this world.

The known facts in his history are few but all significant. He and his father, Simon (John 6:71), were each called Iscariot, which means the man from Kerioth, a little town in Judea. He seems to have been the only Judean among the Twelve. The Galilean apostles were bound together by common ties; and

some of them were friends even before they followed Jesus. Judas entered the band a stranger and an alien; and his self-centered nature would keep him from forming strong friendships. Thus he lacked one support in the hour of temptation. Because he was a Judean his Messianic ideas differed somewhat from those of his comrades; and the contempt for Galileans, which he had been taught to cherish, made it hard for him to surrender his heart to Jesus, and trust when he could not understand. There were hours when the others faltered, but love kept them loyal; Judas lacked this support also. Why, then, did he follow Jesus at all? Partly because he believed him to be the promised Messiah whom every Jew ought to follow, and partly because he sought for worldly advancement. He took the position of treasurer in the little company, thinking thereby to secure a corresponding position in the kingdom that Jesus would presently establish; and yet, doubtless, the call of Jesus appealed to his higher nature. Unmixed motives are rare; and a blending of selfishness with devotion is evident in others of the Twelve.

The first great time of testing was when the popularity of Jesus waned, and the hope of an earthly kingdom grew faint. It was a critical time for the other apostles; but love and faith brought them safely through it. Judas himself did not wholly fall away; yet his spirit of selfish disappointment and gathering resentment was evident to Jesus, and caused Him to say, "One of you is a devil" (John 6:70). This spirit increased, as the months went by and Jesus made no move to become a king. Judas feared he was following a leader who had held out hopes without intending to realize them; and he grew bitter towards Jesus.

As ambition was increasingly thwarted, a meaner passion increased in power. Avarice developed, and by the time of the feast in Simon's house Judas was stealing from the common purse (John 12:6). Doubtless he quieted his conscience by justifying his act:—Jesus under false pretences had kept him away from lucrative employment; the money embezzled was but scanty wages for the time he had wasted in foolish discipleship.

In his act of betrayal Judas was influenced by avarice, but this was not the chief motive. The failure of the triumphal entry had convinced him that Jesus would never be king. Therefore he felt himself swindled in having followed such a pretender. He hated the Twelve and their Master, and believed himself a wronged man. He would hand them over to the fate they deserved at the hands of the Sanhedrin, and in doing so would get what money he could out of it. Thirty pieces of silver (probably shekels from the temple treasury) would be equal to 120 denarii, and a denarius was a day's wage. The amount was the price of a slave (Ex. 21:32), and, though not a great sum, was worth securing, and was all he could get,—except the contents of the purse. (If only Mary had sold the ointment, and put 300 denarii into that purse!) Avarice, then, and revenge worked together; but revenge was the chief motive. It is the more deadly passion; but liable, when glutted, to turn into remorse, as avarice does not.

There are two accounts of the death of Judas, that in Matt. 27:3 f. and that in Acts 1:18 f. They disagree as to who purchased the field,—the priests or Judas; as to how Judas died,—by hanging or by falling headlong; and as to the origin of the name of the field,—

the price of blood or the bloody death. They may by an effort be harmonized, but it is better to leave them as two diverse accounts of how a bad man came to a bad end;—or we may reject the one in Acts as being originally a note by some scholiast. Papias (70-155 A.D.) gives a version of the death still more revolting: “Judas walked about in this world, a sad example of impiety; for his body had swollen to such an extent that he could not pass where a chariot would pass easily; he was crushed by the chariot so that his bowels gushed out.” Later traditions are even more horrible. Imagination loved to dwell upon the wretched end of Judas; but no statement is more appalling in its unexpressed significance than that of Peter when he speaks of the apostleship “from which Judas fell away that he might go *to his own place*” (Acts 1:25).



## XVIII

### THE TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION

WE have seen how the raising of Lazarus made the Sanhedrin agree that it was expedient for them that Jesus should die (John 11:50). The grounds of the expediency were religious, political and financial; Jesus must be put out of the way because He denounced the teachings of the Pharisees, threatened the comfortable relations with Rome of the Sadducees, and condemned the temple traffic of the chief priests. But this removal must be in such a way as not to offend the people; even the Sanhedrin did not care to face a tempest of popular indignation. While vainly seeking an opportunity to assassinate Him, they found that one of His disciples stood ready to betray Him. Thereupon it was determined to compass Jesus' death by an official sentence followed by a Roman execution. This was a more hazardous course, and for its success three things were necessary. First, Jesus must be arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin without arousing a tumult or a rescue by His friends. The offer by Judas to lead them to His nightly retreat made this possible. Second, Pilate must be induced to pronounce sentence and order execution promptly; it would be politic to have the Roman government bear the final responsibility for the death. Concerning this they had little anxiety. Pilate was disposed to conciliate the Jews, especially at the great festival seasons when Jerusalem was crowded and any disturbances might be disastrous;

a formal request from the Sanhedrin would have much weight with him; and the death of the Galilean peasant-prophet would be a trifle to a ruler who already had mingled the blood of Galileans with their feast (Luke 13: 1). Third, a pretext must be found which would justify the execution of Jesus in the opinion of the people. This was the most important and difficult part of the affair. The multitude would not question closely into the trial itself; any illegality here might be concealed; but it certainly would ask for what reason the Sanhedrin had put the reputed prophet to death, and would not be satisfied unless the offence evidently merited such punishment. To decide upon a suitable charge against their prisoner was the main work of the Sanhedrin in the hours between Christ's midnight arrest and His presentation before Pilate the next morning. The proceedings were in no sense a trial, unless we choose to call that a trial in which first the sentence is determined upon and then reasons for it are sought. Volumes have been written discussing the legality of the proceedings; but such discussion is largely idle because we have no certain knowledge of the laws that regulated the acts of the Sanhedrin in the days of Jesus. We do have very exact rules for all its proceedings set forth in the Talmud; but these received their final form centuries after the Sanhedrin ceased to exist, and seem for the most part purely academic.

### 1. Jesus before the Sanhedrin.

The details are somewhat confused. All the Synop-  
tists agree that there was some kind of a meeting at  
night in the house of Caiaphas, soon after the arrest:  
and another early in the morning, just before taking  
Jesus to Pilate. But Matthew and Mark put the chief

examination in the night meeting, while Luke puts it in the morning. John tells that Jesus was led first of all to Annas; and we are somewhat puzzled to follow his later account because we are not sure whom he designates as "the highpriest." (He says expressly that Caiaphas was "highpriest that year" (18:13) and calls him "the highpriest" (18:24); but it seems likely that he also calls Annas the highpriest, because Annas had formerly held that office and still was the head of the hierarchy. Compare Luke's "in the highpriesthood of Annas and Caiaphas" (3:2), also Acts 4:6 where Annas is called highpriest). A possible arrangement of the incidents is all that can be claimed for the following narrative.

Jesus, when arrested, was taken before Annas, the old leader of the priestly party, who briefly examined Him while the council was gathering, and then sent Him still bound to Caiaphas and the midnight meeting (John 18:24). Though Mark says (14:53) that "all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes" were at the midnight meeting, yet he (see 15:1) and the other Synoptists describe the meeting as less full and formal than that of the next morning. Probably only the leaders of the Sanhedrin were present, and they came to determine by consultation and by examination of their prisoner what offence should be the pretext for His death. They had no doubt that Pilate would pronounce a death sentence simply at their request; but they must find some charge against Jesus that would make the people approve His condemnation. Evidently the acts which had stirred up their own hostility against Jesus,—such as His purification of the temple, His disregard of the traditions of the elders, His denunciation of scribes and Pharisees,—could not

be brought forward, because some of them had the endorsement of the people, and others did not justify extreme punishment. Various creatures of the priests were ready to swear to anything; but there was not time to train these in perjury, and their testimony in its present shape was plainly false. Once, indeed, it seemed as if the desired charge was found. Two men bore testimony that Jesus had said, "I will destroy the temple, and build it again in three days." And the people, who held sacred the very stones of the temple, and were ready to tear in pieces any one who dared to profane it, would agree that death was a proper punishment for making such a threat. But these two witnesses, testifying as they did to a garbled statement, disagreed so manifestly that they had to be set aside. The people might remember what Jesus had really said.

Time was passing. Unless some decision was speedily reached before daybreak, their victim might escape. In fury Caiaphas turned upon the silent prisoner, and tried to browbeat Him into saying something that would incriminate Him; but Jesus remained silent. There was one thing more Caiaphas could do; administering to Jesus the most solemn of oaths, "I adjure thee by the living God" (Matt. 26:63), he put the question, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"; in other words, "Art thou the Messiah?" Jesus might have refused to answer. But this was the hour for His supreme testimony to the Sanhedrin,—the hour He had long awaited when the head of the nation should solemnly ask Him His nature and mission, and should be as solemnly answered. His answer claimed Messianic position and power to the utmost extent, "I am; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the

clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62). It solved the problem of the rulers. The man who falsely claimed to be the Messiah,—and the Sanhedrin was recognized to be the proper judge of such claims,—was guilty of blasphemy that should be punished by death; so every devout Jew would agree. Of course, Pilate might not think the same; but they had no expectation of difficulty with Pilate. The midnight meeting then adjourned, leaving Jesus to the mockery and abuse of His Jewish guard.

The denial of Jesus by Peter took place during these hours. The incident is interesting for its light upon Peter's character; but is of no special importance otherwise. Note how Luke softens the account by Mark and Matthew,—omitting the cursing, making the three denials an anti-climax, and alone telling of the look of Jesus,—and how John tells the story with even more consideration for Peter.

In the morning, "as soon as it was day," there was another gathering. Now the whole Sanhedrin was present, excepting probably Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathaea and any other friends of Jesus. At this time there may possibly have been some semblance of a hasty trial,—the putting again the question, and judgment passed upon the answer; but the purpose of the gathering was to take the prisoner formally to Pilate before news of the midnight arrest became public. Accordingly it was a brief meeting; and from it they went directly to Pilate's palace.

## 2. Jesus before Pilate.

Pilate was procurator from 26 to 36 A.D. What we know about him, outside of the gospel narrative, is mainly from Josephus, who evidently was prejudiced



against him. The fact that he rose from obscurity to the responsible position of a Roman procurator, and succeeded in governing the turbulent province of Judea for a longer period than any other of the fourteen procurators save one, proves that he was neither weak nor foolish. In the present scene he appears creditably, and makes a hard fight to save a prisoner about whom He evidently knows a good deal, and whose death he is aware is sought by the rulers for envy (Mark 15: 10).

It is not easy to arrange the incidents of the trial before Pilate because each evangelist gives only selections from them. If we may use legal terms in describing a proceeding that little resembled a legal trial, we can say that twice Pilate dismissed the case as not being in his jurisdiction, three times he declared there was no evidence worth considering, and three times he instructed the jury to acquit the prisoner: then most reluctantly he pronounced sentence of death.

The rulers presented the prisoner to be sentenced to death on the bare statement that they had found Him to be a malefactor. The impudence of the request brought out the sarcastic retort from Pilate, "If you have taken this matter into your own hands, carry out your sentence without me." This forced the humiliating confession that a death sentence was beyond their power (John 18: 28-32). Then they brought forward political charges which they thought would be most effective, viz.: that Jesus forbade the payment of Roman taxes and proclaimed Himself a king. Pilate knew the Jews well enough to be certain that they never would ask the death of a countryman for these offences; and a private examination of Jesus showed at once that the charges were false. The kingdom He

claimed meant little to Pilate : but certainly it was not a menace to the Roman rule. Accordingly he dismissed the complaint : " I find no fault in this man " (Luke 23:1-4; John 18:33-38). Another political charge, more plausible because of the recent triumphal entry, was brought forward : " He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place." The mention of Galilee disclosed the fact that Jesus was a Galilean; and Pilate both freed himself from this troublesome prisoner and paid a compliment to Herod Antipas, who happened to be in Jerusalem, by sending Jesus to him to be dealt with as one of his own subjects (Luke 23:5-7).

Herod listened to the accusations : but he was too diplomatic to take any active step towards acquitting or condemning Jesus, since it would offend either the chief men of Judea or the friends of Jesus in Galilee. He had no sympathy with Him as a religious teacher, and had ceased to fear Him as a possible insurrectionist ; but he had long wished to see him perform a miracle. When he found that Jesus remained absolutely passive in his presence, he sent Him back to Pilate, clothed in a royal robe as a gibe at the idea of deeming Him a king (Luke 23:8-12).

Next, Pilate proposed a compromise ;—he would scourge Jesus and then release Him. Evidently he was weakening ; so the rulers rejected his proposal (Luke 23:13-16). By this time a crowd had come to ask the customary boon of release of a prisoner in honor of the feast. Pilate, remembering the events of Sunday, was sure there must be friends of Jesus in the crowd ; and this suggested a solution of his difficulties :—he would treat Jesus as a condemned

criminal, thus satisfying His accusers, and yet would avoid putting Him to death by offering a choice between Him and Jesus Barabbas, a notorious offender whom he was sure no one would wish released. The unexpected arrival of the outsiders must have disconcerted the rulers, who had hoped to forestall public knowledge of what they were doing; but without much difficulty they persuaded the rabble to choose Barabbas, and in answer to the question what should be done with Jesus, to shout, "Crucify him" (Mark 15: 5-14). Meanwhile a message from his wife had increased Pilate's unwillingness to condemn Jesus (Matt. 27: 19); so next he appealed to the pity of the crowd by presenting Jesus after He had been scourged and crowned with thorns. But to Pilate's "Behold the man!" the cry again was, "Crucify, crucify!" (John 19: 1-5). This obstinate persistence roused Pilate's obstinacy; and he came back to the position he had taken at the outset; with a sneer at the helplessness of the Jews he said, "Take him yourself, and crucify him; for I find no crime in him" (John 19: 6).

Now, the rulers abandoned the political charges, and for the first time revealed the religious charge: "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die because he made himself the Son of God." Whatever Pilate may have understood by the term, "the Son of God," his superstitious dread of Jesus was increased; and after another private examination, he dramatically and impressively washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it." The people, unmoved by his act, replied, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27: 24-25; John 19: 7-12a); and the rulers began to utter openly the grim threat, whose silent force

had kept Pilate in dread of displeasing them, that they would denounce him to Tiberius as a traitor if he released Jesus. This was their final weapon, and it ended the struggle. A hint of disloyalty carried to the savage, suspicious emperor would end Pilate's career and probably his life; the danger must be averted even at the cost of the prisoner's life. Accordingly he prepared to pronounce the desired sentence. And yet he could not help making one more appeal; or it may have been a sarcasm. As Jesus was brought out before the people, he said, "Behold your king! Shall I crucify your king?"; and the chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." They stated truly the position of the Sadducees; but the silent acquiescence of the Pharisees at any other time would have been impossible; for such a statement was political and religious suicide. Then Pilate pronounced sentence (John 19:12b-16), and Jesus was handed over to the Roman soldiers.

The foregoing is a harmonious combination of the four evangelistic narratives. Very possibly some of the incidents are duplicates, varied in the telling, and the story should be much shorter. No alteration in it, however, can materially change the essential features. The incidents of Pilate's washing his hands and the dream of his wife are told only by Matthew, whose account of these closing scenes contains (as we shall have occasion again to remark) several legendary items; they are not necessarily unauthentic, but must be received with reservation.

### 3. The Crucifixion.

The place where Jesus was crucified must remain undetermined. We know only that it was just outside

the city (John 19:20; Heb. 13:12), probably near a highway (Mark 15:29), and called Golgotha (in Latin, Calvaria) which means a skull. Whether it received this name because it was a skull-shaped hill (Mount Calvary is a fifth-century expression), or because it was the place of public execution, we do not know. In the time of Constantine the spot was supposed to be where the Church of the Holy Sepulcher now stands, inside the present walls. A popular identification today is the hill just north of the city, above the grotto of Jeremiah.

Mark says, "It was the *third* hour, and they crucified him" (15:25). This seems contradicted by John who says, "It was about the *sixth* hour" (19:14), when Pilate gave orders that He should be crucified. The easiest explanation is that John reckoned time as we do; the final sentence then would be passed "about,"—probably after,—six in the morning, and the crucifixion would be at nine. All three Synoptists speak of darkness lasting from the sixth to the ninth hour, when Jesus died; this fixes His death at three in the afternoon.

Stoning was the usual Jewish form of capital punishment. Crucifixion was a Roman form, borrowed perhaps from the Persians by way of the Greeks, or perhaps from the Carthaginians who used it extensively. The Romans at first used it only for slaves and aliens. Tradition says that the cross on which Jesus died was in the form we now call the Latin cross; but it was not the tall structure of heavy sawn beams usually shown in pictures. Two rough sticks carried by the victim,—the upright one strong enough to support his weight and long enough to raise his feet from the ground,—would suffice. (A reed was long enough to



lift the sponge to Jesus' lips (Mark 15:36). Even a cross of this weight was too much for the ebbing strength of Jesus; and the centurion impressed a passerby to carry it. This was Simon, a man of Cyrene in Africa (but probably a Jew, not a negro), who seems to have become a Christian,—at least his two sons are mentioned as if they were well-known persons in the circle for whom Mark wrote. It was, perhaps, during the transfer of the cross, and while the women were expressing sympathy for the exhausted prisoner, that Jesus spoke His words of sympathetic prophecy about their own sad fate (Luke 23:27 f.).

The purpose of crucifixion was to inflict a lingering and most agonizing death. The victim was nailed to the cross before it was raised and put in place. A peg in the center of the upright post helped to support the body which otherwise might have torn loose from the nails. The crucified might live for two or three days, screaming and cursing in pain. Jesus died at the end of six hours,—so soon as to cause surprise. According to Stroud, who wrote a book on the subject, He died literally of a broken heart. The loud cry at the instant of death (Mark 15:37), and the mingled blood and water (serum) which flowed when the spear pierced His corpse (John 19:34), are thought to indicate this cause of death. Whether Stroud is correct or not, certainly the physical and emotional strain of the preceding hours was enough to produce a speedy death.

The seven recorded utterances ("the seven words") of Jesus during the crucifixion are precious revelations of what was passing through His mind in these final hours. The first was His prayer for those who

crucified Him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). We can see no reason why any copyist should omit this, but it is not found in some of the oldest manuscripts. It seems, therefore, not to have been in Luke's account; yet it bears the stamp of truth so plainly that few would reject it. Like the story of the woman taken in adultery, it is one of the facts preserved by tradition alone until inserted in a gospel later on. No teaching about forgiveness, not even that of Jesus Himself, has so powerfully influenced the world as this prayer for the brutal Roman soldiers when they were nailing Him to the cross.

The next word was the promise to the penitent thief, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Probably the man knew something about the prophet from Nazareth; and the inscription on the cross, as well as the jeers of the crowd that stood around, brought His claims to mind afresh. But the prayer, "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," was a triumph of faith, to which Jesus responded as He always did. The thief prayed that somehow, somewhere, in the unknown future when all wrong is righted, Jesus would not forget a fellow sufferer; and the reply was that this very day his desire should be satisfied.

The third word was a final provision for His mother's comfort. The disciples had all fled at the arrest; but John and Peter came back to the trial before the council. Possibly others had now rallied, and were at the crucifixion, standing afar off (Luke 23:49) or daring to venture nearer. The Galilean women, also, were there at the foot of the cross, among them Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the

less and Joses, Salome the mother of James and John (probably the same as "his mother's sister" of John 19:25, though some would make the sister to be Mary the mother of James the less and Joses), and above all Mary, His own mother. Except for this incident we could not know that she was one of the devoted band of women who followed Him. Possibly, however, she had come up for the feast; we know this was her custom earlier (Luke 2:41). He dared not speak her name now, nor reveal His relationship, lest the hostile crowd insult her; but with "Woman, behold, thy son," and "Behold, thy mother," He commended her to John, who straightway led her from the scene (John 19:25-27). Whether this meant simply that John should care for her at this terribly trying hour, or whether henceforth he was to act a son's part, as later tradition says he did, cannot be determined. A few weeks later Mary is mentioned along with her sons, as if they were living together (Acts 1:14).

The darkness which at noontime settled down upon the land must have awed the jeering spectators into silence, and freed the last hours of Jesus from their mockery. And not until just as the darkness was lifting was there another utterance from the cross. Then came the cry with an anguish like that of Gethsemane, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). The words are the opening of the twenty-second psalm, the psalm which pictures the anguish of the cross more clearly than any account of the evangelists. What they meant in the lips of Jesus, those only who have passed through deepest spiritual suffering for the sins of loved ones are competent to explain.

The next word from the cross, "I thirst" (John 19:

28), seems also an echo of the same psalm (22: 15). It moved one of the bystanders to press a sponge full of sour wine to the parched lips. Jesus had refused the narcotic drink, wine mingled with myrrh, which was offered to the prisoners before they were crucified. He would not enter the final struggle in a stupor. But in this act of kindly service He did not refuse; there was no reason why He should.

The last two words followed rapidly, "It is finished" (John 19: 30), which some would connect with the closing statement of that same twenty-second psalm, and "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23: 46; cf. Ps. 31: 5). "And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." The agony of the cross was ended.

In Matt. 27: 51-53 we are told that the death of Christ was accompanied by various portents,—“the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tomb after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many.” All this is peculiar to Matthew, except that Mark and Luke give the rending of the veil; and we have already noticed that Matthew in this portion of his narrative shows a fondness for the purely marvellous. Some critics try to explain these portents as natural events connected with an earthquake,—the darkness, also, being the gloom preceding an earthquake. Earthquakes are not unusual in Palestine; and though an earthquake could not rend a veil or cause the dead to rise, it might open tombs, or break the lintel of the temple door (Jerome says that the Gospel of the

Hebrews had "lintel" instead of "veil"). Josephus tells of certain portents connected with the temple about this time, e.g., that the brazen gates opened of their own accord. The objection to accepting the portents as actual, supernatural events is their uselessness and, to some degree, childishness. Moreover, the rent veil is evidently a symbolical statement of free approach through Christ to God (cf. Heb. 10:19-20). Likewise, that saints came forth from their tombs after Christ's resurrection seems to be only another way of stating that the risen Christ is the first fruits of the dead (I Cor. 15:23).

The centurion in charge of the crucifixion (and according to Matthew, "those that were with him"), when he saw how Jesus died, testified, "Truly this man was a Son of God" (Mark 15:39). What did he mean? Possibly simply a good man,—so Luke puts it, "Certainly this was a righteous man" (23:47); possibly a demigod, for such would be his understanding of the charge that Jesus claimed to be divine; possibly a king,—even as the title above the cross indicated,—for the Roman emperors claimed to be sons of the gods.

Joseph of Arimathaea, "a rich man" (Matt.), "a councillor of honorable estate" (Mark), "a good man and a righteous" (Luke), "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews" (John), seems to have been at the cross; for he promptly knew of Jesus' death. He asked Pilate for the body, and with the help of Nicodemus prepared it for burial, and placed it in his own new tomb in a garden near the cross.

Matthew alone tells how the chief priests and Pharisees, fearing that the disciples would steal the body and then declare that there had been a resurrection,



gained permission from Pilate to seal the tomb and set a watch, and did this "on the morrow,"—probably Saturday morning, though possibly Friday evening (Matt. 27: 62-66). As there was no reason why the Sanhedrin should be thus apprehensive, since the followers of Jesus had no thought of a resurrection even when they found the tomb empty on Sunday morning, this incident,—including Matthew's account of what happened to the watchers (28: 2-4, 11-15),—should be put among the later traditions. The chief priests and Pharisees undoubtedly ate their Passover suppers that Friday night with tranquillity and self-satisfaction, and sang most gratefully the Hallelujah Psalms. For the man who had defied their power, broken their laws and led the people far astray was dead and buried; and His disciples were scattered in terror.

## XIX

### THE RESURRECTION

**T**HE original ending of the Gospel of Mark has been hopelessly lost, and neither of the present endings is more than a feeble attempt by later copyists to supply some sort of a conclusion. The loss is greatly to be regretted; yet if Matthew and Luke used the Gospel of Mark here as one of their sources, as they did up to this point, we may suppose they have incorporated in their narrative the facts contained in the lost ending. Fortunately we have for this chapter in Christ's life an additional source,—the list of resurrection appearances given by Paul in I Cor. 15: 1-11. It is a brief reference to his fuller oral account, and apparently does not profess to be complete; but it is most valuable because of its early date (I Corinthians was written not later than 58 A.D., and possibly as early as 50 A.D.), and because of Paul's interest in the facts, and his opportunity to learn the truth about them. The various accounts of the resurrection appearances are fragmentary, and not always easy to harmonize; but this need not be reckoned an argument against their truthfulness, if we can see good reasons why they should be so. Probably there were other appearances besides those recorded. No one attempted to make a full list of them; and in proportion as the belief in a living and present Christ was established, and was confirmed by spiritual experience, the need of the original evidence was not felt.

### 1. Appearances of the Risen Christ.

Before discussing the credibility of the resurrection story, it is advisable to arrange and harmonize its incidents as far as possible. Paul's list, though incomplete, seems to follow the historical order, and helps us somewhat in determining the order in the Gospels. The appearances seem to have been as follows:

#### 1). To Mary Magdalene.

The most confused portion of the whole narrative is the record of what happened to the women who went to the tomb on Sunday morning before sunrise. This is natural; the report of the excited women was imperfectly understood and only partially credited, and the reports of Peter and the apostles were more generally circulated. That the appearance to Mary Magdalene is a later invention is improbable; invention would have assigned the first sight of the risen Lord to a more prominent person. As an attempt,—perhaps useless,—to harmonize the four accounts we may suppose the following to have been the actual course of events:

The women go together towards the sepulcher bringing the spices they have prepared; as they draw near they see the stone rolled away; Mary Magdalene at once concludes that the tomb has been rifled, and runs to report this sacrilege to the apostles. The other women come to the tomb, and receive the message of an angel that Jesus is risen and will go before His disciples into Galilee where they may see Him; then filled with fear they flee from the place. Peter and John, stirred by Mary's report, hasten to the spot and enter the tomb. The orderly arrangement of the grave-clothes convinces John that the body has not been

stolen; and he begins imperfectly to believe that there has been a resurrection. They return home. Mary, coming back again to the tomb, sees two angels, and then sees and, when addressed by name, recognizes Jesus Himself. The reason for His prohibition when she clings to His feet,—“Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father” (John 20: 17),—is not evident. Was her act the instinctive expression of a wish to keep Him with her in resumption of His life before the crucifixion, or was it an act of worship (cf. Matt. 28: 9) such as He was not ready to receive because He had not yet become her ascended Lord?

2). To Peter.

The angel's message, “Tell his disciples and Peter” (Mark 16: 7), prepares us for a special manifestation to Peter, who is weighed down with shame over his denial, and needs to be assured that he is forgiven and restored to a place among the disciples; but we have no record of it except Paul's, “He appeared to Cephas” (I Cor. 15: 5), and the statement of the Eleven on Easter evening, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon” (Luke 24: 34). The latter shows that the appearance to Peter was the first sure ground of a belief that Jesus had risen: Peter's testimony bore weight, when that of Mary Magdalene did not. Thus, being converted, he strengthened the brethren (Luke 22: 32).

3). To Cleopas and Another.

This was on Easter afternoon when these two disciples were walking to Emmaus, a village (location disputed) sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, and apparently the home of one or both (Luke 24: 13 f.). Their words to Jesus reveal the mingled hope and despair that filled the minds of all the disciples on Easter day.

Jesus was a mighty prophet certainly; but His death proves they were mistaken in believing Him to be the one "who was to redeem Israel" (note the Jewish form of their Messianic expectation); and yet,—what means this strange story of an empty tomb and angelic messages? The discourse of Jesus, pointing out prophecies of the Messiah's agony and death preliminary to his entrance into glory, fires their hearts with hope; but it is not until at the evening meal He blesses and breaks the bread in the old, familiar way, that they recognize the mysterious stranger to be their risen Lord. And when the recognition is reached, He vanishes; His work with them is completed. (Renan's explanation of this appearance is amusingly absurd. The stranger was simply some pious man well versed in the Scriptures. The evening meal recalled Jesus so strongly, that the two fell into a deep reverie, and scarcely noticed that their companion,—eager to continue his journey,—had left them. After his departure they roused up, and were sure that it was Jesus, and that He had miraculously vanished!)

Why did they fail to recognize Him until the end? Mark 16:12 says, "He was manifested in another form"; but this is a later explanation. Luke 24:16 says, "Their eyes were holden that they should not know him"; but this seems like one of Luke's notes of apology. Mary Magdalene, when He first spoke to her, thought He was the gardener; but she had not turned to look at Him, and was overwhelmed with grief. These two disciples may not have known Him intimately; and with their minds preoccupied with the belief that He was dead, they may have failed to recognize Him, though one of the apostles would have known Him at once. Or, of course, it may be that He



was in some way changed, though no other account of His appearance indicates this.

4). To the Ten and Others.

Luke says this appearance was to "the Eleven and them that were with them" (24:33), but John explains that Thomas was absent. Either Luke did not know this, or he used to term "the Eleven" as equivalent to "the Apostles"; in Paul's list it is probably the one "to the Twelve."

The place was a room in Jerusalem, possibly the chamber of the Last Supper;—and the doors were shut for fear of the Jews. The disciples were drawn together by the glad news that Jesus had risen and appeared to Peter. Cleopas and his companion were relating their own experience, when suddenly Jesus stood in their midst with the customary Oriental greeting, "Peace unto you." Despite their belief that He had risen, they were frightened, and with difficulty could be convinced that they beheld Jesus in the flesh and not a ghost. It was the old panic, experienced on the Galilean lake a year before (Matt. 14:26). It was succeeded by great joy: then followed a divine commission, given to all, and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit by an act which reminds us of the account of man's creation (Gen. 2:7). Did it typify a new and still higher creation?

These four appearances on Easter Sunday are full of little touches so true psychologically as to make us believe that the story cannot be the crude product of later imagination. E.g., Mary Magdalene feels that men not women must deal with the startling situation: John, the boy disciple, outruns Peter but hesitates to enter the tomb until unconsciously influenced by the older man's act; the appearance to the penitent Peter

is a private matter between him and his Master (imagination in later days would have filled with details this experience of the chief apostle); the two on the way to Emmaus are so full of their sorrow that they are surprised the stranger is ignorant of it, and after they have recognized Jesus they cannot stop even to eat before carrying the news back to the Eleven; the despondent Thomas not only refuses to accept the tidings of Mary and Peter but shuts himself away from the rest because he cannot endure their exultation. Far more than this, however, "the appearances on Easter Day, regarded as a whole, bear the stamp of the mind of Jesus Christ; the Easter sayings are such as no sane criticism can attribute to the imagination of the Apostolic Age. It needs a sturdy scepticism to doubt that these narratives rest on a solid basis of fact, or that words so characteristic of the great Master are in substance the words of the risen Christ" (Swete).

5). To Thomas with the Others.

This took place a week later, apparently in the same room and at the same hour,—Sunday evening. The first day of the week was becoming full of sacred associations with the risen Lord. The very early Epistle of Barnabas says that ascension, also, was on a Sunday (in which case we must treat "forty days" as a round number); and Dr. Briggs finds reasons for believing that each Sunday until the ascension was marked by at least one of the recorded appearances. "These appearances of Jesus on successive Sundays," he says, "may have given origin to the assembling of Christians on that day, and also to the use of the term, the Lord's Day."

The Galilean disciples, we may be sure, had already

departed on their homeward journey; and the apostles seemed to be disregarding the message of Easter morning (Mark 16:7) by lingering in Jerusalem. Possibly Thomas refused to depart until his doubts were removed, and the others were unwilling to leave him behind. He was always slow to believe and inclined to take a desponding view; but his present reluctance to accept the testimony of his companions seems caused less by disinclination than by a fear that their eager desire had made them self-deceived. Jesus showed that He knew the test Thomas had laid down; and He offered to submit to it, but warned him against yielding to his special temptation to become sceptical (John 20:27). Such knowledge and rebuke were enough for Thomas; he believed without applying the test, and made the highest confession of faith,—“My Lord and my God.”

6). To Seven by the Lake.

These seven were Peter, Thomas, Nathanael (Bartholomew), James, John and two others: according to the Gospel of Peter, the two were Matthew and Andrew.

To them as they were fishing in the gray morning twilight Jesus called, in familiar fisherman phrase, “Boys, you haven’t caught any fish, have you?”; and gave directions where to cast the net. Thereupon they took such a multitude of fishes, one hundred and fifty-three great ones, that John recalled the opening scene of the Galilean ministry (Luke 5:6), and said to Peter, “It is the Lord.” Peter was “stripped” for his work; but, putting on his frock, he impetuously waded ashore without waiting the slow movements of the net and boat. There was a mysterious reserve at the morning meal which Jesus served them; they knew

it was the Lord, and yet they dared neither reveal their knowledge nor dissemble it; and as on certain occasions in the old days (e.g., Mark 10: 32; Luke 9: 45), they waited in awe and silence until He should disclose what was in His thoughts. His special mission was with Peter; and this time it was a public not a private matter. On Easter He had restored him to discipleship; now He restored him to apostleship,—“ feed my sheep.” The thrice repeated, “ Lovest thou me? ” corresponds to the thrice repeated denial by Peter in the court of the highpriest.

Note that, important as it is, we nearly failed to have a record of this scene. John added it to his gospel as an afterthought to explain how the saying arose that he himself would live till the second coming of the Lord.

7). To the Eleven and more than Five Hundred.

The appearance reported in Matt. 28: 16-20 and that in I Cor. 15: 6 are probably the same. A prearranged meeting for the apostles alone would seem unnecessary; and certainly the “ some ” who doubted while the others worshipped could not be any of the Eleven, for their doubts had already been removed. Among the five hundred, who for the first time were beholding their risen Master, some would be as slow as Thomas to believe. That Jesus sought to remove their unbelief by a clearer manifestation of Himself is hinted in the narrative,—“ they saw him, . . . some doubted; and Jesus came to them ”; and that doubt ended in full belief is evident from the fact that Paul reckons all the five hundred among his witnesses, and says that most of them are still alive to offer their testimony.

This gathering of a great body of His disciples on “ the mountain ” in Galilee recalls the time in the Gali-

lean ministry when a similar body was gathered, perhaps on the same height, and Jesus appointed the Twelve to be apostles. The purpose for which He brought them together now was similar to that of the earlier meeting, though with clearer spiritual significance; it was a reappointment of leaders for His church, but with greater power and a wider field. Peter had been restored to his place and given his commission in the presence of his brethren by the lake; now all the Eleven were restored to their apostleship, and given their commission in the presence of the great assembly of disciples on the mountain. And in a new sermon on the mount Jesus mapped out the future programme of the church, and gave the formula of baptism (some critics doubt this, but with no strong reasons), closing with the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

It was here in the presence of the apostles and the church that Jesus made the most remarkable of all His statements about Himself: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." Throughout His ministry there had been a constantly increasing revelation of His authority: to forgive sins (Mark 2: 10), to act as final judge (John 5: 27), to fix the limits of His own earthly life (John 10: 18), to give eternal life (John 17: 2); but this includes and far surpasses all. Nothing that Paul has written in his attempt to state the sovereignty of Christ begins to reach the compass of these simple words of his Lord. "Human thought loses itself in the attempt to understand what must be comprehended in such authority as this" (Plummer).

8). To James.

This appearance, which is mentioned only by Paul



(I Cor. 15:7), was probably to the brother of Jesus, not to either of the two apostles of that name. All details are unknown; but, remembering that His brethren did not believe on Him during His ministry, we are justified in supposing that it had something to do with creating their later belief. The Gospel according to the Hebrews has a curious story of this appearance, not worth repeating.

9). To the Eleven at Ascension.

The apostles were now back in Jerusalem, the place where they were to begin work under their great commission. There seem to have been several appearances here; but we cannot distinguish those before the ascension from the one at the ascension. Luke dovetails them in his gospel, and goes into no full details in Acts. It is instructive, however, to note that if the author of the Third Gospel had not also written the Book of Acts, some critics might argue that he knew of no appearances except those on Easter Day, and that he supposed the ascension took place at the close of that day; whereas, in Acts he states plainly that the appearances covered a space of forty days, and then were concluded by the ascension. This shows the danger of relying upon the argument from silence, which is used so often and so confidently.

Apparently the period was one of fuller instruction about matters which the apostles could not understand before His death and resurrection, and was their final preparation for the great work that lay before them. Much remained to be taught them. The old idea of a temporal kingdom had not wholly disappeared (Acts 1:6); and the words of Jesus, "speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3), were needed. The work of the apostles was clearly set

before them: "Ye shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth": and power for this work by the coming of the Holy Spirit was promised them (Acts 1:8).

The ascension differed from the earlier manifestations of Jesus only in the way in which He departed from the disciples. Instead of suddenly vanishing, "he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). With their Jewish idea that heaven is above the earth and that a cloud is the manifestation of Jehovah, this meant to them that He "was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mark 15:19). Here, again, it is instructive to note that the Third Gospel tells the story most simply: "It came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them; and they returned to Jerusalem" (Luke 24:51 f.) Had the later book of Acts been by another author, its additional details,—both the ascension and the message of the angels,—would be pointed out as a sure proof that the story of Jesus' last appearance had grown more marvellous as time went on.

10). To Paul.

Whether this was of the same character as the foregoing ones must be discussed later. Certainly the development of belief in the resurrection was complete long before Paul was converted; and details of this appearance belong to a life of Paul rather than to a life of Jesus.

## 2. Origin of Belief in the Risen Christ.

Beyond all question the early Christians believed and proclaimed that Jesus arose from the dead. No

other explanation of the rise of the Christian church is possible. The crucifixion of Jesus would have been for his followers an end of all their hopes, and a proof of the falsity of His teachings concerning Himself and His Messianic reign, unless belief in His resurrection had overcome the consternation and despair caused by His death, and explained, or at least dispelled, the ignominy of the cross. Those who deny the fact of the resurrection admit this; Renan says, " 'He is risen!' has been the basis of the faith of humanity "; and Harnack says, "The primitive community called Jesus its Lord because He had sacrificed His life for it, and because its members were convinced that He had been raised from the dead, and was then sitting on the right hand of God."

If we refuse to credit the gospel narrative and hold that Jesus did not rise from the dead, we must in some way explain the origin of this belief in His resurrection. And the explanation that the story was a myth, a legend, a tradition, cannot be offered here,—as it is in the case of Jesus' miracles,—because myths and the rest require time for their development, but this belief in the resurrection arose before the Day of Pentecost. The assignment of a late date to the Gospels in no way helps towards an explanation, though evidently those who do not believe that Jesus rose from the dead must treat the gospel story as late and garbled.

The following are some of the theories accounting for the belief in the resurrection, if that belief was not based on fact.

#### A. Fraud.

The fraud may have been on the part of Jesus who was not really dead when placed in the tomb, and revived enough so that He was able to come forth and act

the part of a risen Christ in Jerusalem and in Galilee. This theory needs little discussion. The moral character of Jesus makes it impossible. Moreover, if a man who had suffered what Jesus did could have strength enough to act such a part, what became of Him later on? Did He die in secret after a few weeks, or did He deliberately shut Himself away from His disciples that they might think He had ascended to heaven? To state the problem seems enough to show its absurdity.

Again, the fraud may have been on the part of the apostles, who knew that Jesus was dead, but falsely and persistently affirmed that He had risen. This is equally incredible. There was nothing to gain by such deception and men do not suffer persecution and martyrdom for what they know to be a lie. And psychologically it is impossible that the disciples consecrated their lives to preaching the sublime doctrines of Jesus, while they carried in their hearts the secret that the main fact to which they pointed in proof of the truth of the message was a lie of their own invention.

#### B. Hysteria.

This is the well-known theory of Renan. Mary Magdalene, hysterical and most devoted, fancies she sees and hears her Lord as she stands weeping by the empty tomb. "The miracle of love is accomplished; the resurrection has its first direct witness." She tells the story to the rest; and they fall into an excited state in which they, too, begin to see and hear a risen Jesus. And so by the contagion of hysteria the proofs of the resurrection are created. (A variant of the theory makes Peter the first hysteric.)

This picture of the state of mind of the apostles is contrary to the whole gospel record. Everything indi-

cates that they were prosaic, sensible men, in no way inclined to hysteria and delusion. Moreover, to imagine a resurrection, one must be expecting it; and apparently they were sorrowing without hope, and could with difficulty be made to realize that their Master had really arisen. Then, too, an epidemic of hysteria does not follow the course described in the gospel story. It neither begins so suddenly and violently as the events of Easter Day would necessitate, nor runs its course so quickly as to end in forty days; nor does it leave its victims in the tranquil, strong, practical frame of mind with which the apostles took up their great work of witness-bearing.

The question how the tomb came to be empty, and what became of the body of Jesus, is one Renan admits he cannot answer. He suggests that there was "some little deceit in the matter." Possibly Mary of Bethany had carried away the corpse. The napkin so carefully folded "would lead to the conclusion that a female hand had slipped in there. And what did it matter definitively? The result alone counts in such a matter." Thus he solves a serious difficulty by a shrug of the shoulders.

### C. A Heavenly Vision.

This is the theory of Keim and many others. There was no bodily resurrection; but to Peter and the rest Jesus granted a vision of Himself in His spiritual and glorified state,—“a telegram from heaven” assuring them that He had triumphed over death: and in later days these visions were changed in the telling into appearances in the flesh. Much is made of the vision granted to Paul which is declared to have been purely spiritual, thus proving the earlier ones to have been the same.



This theory can be held by those who accept Jesus as the divine Saviour of the world, and may help some who stumble at a bodily resurrection. But it can be held only by rejecting the record, which unquestionably tells of appearances of Jesus in the flesh. If the Gospels are of the first century, how could visions be thus transformed into physical appearances within the lifetime of some who heard Peter and the others tell their story? Would not the tendency of later thought be to change a physical manifestation into a spiritual one rather than the reverse? Since the early Christians were accustomed to think of their glorified Lord as still in their midst and able to reveal Himself spiritually, why should they imagine that during the first weeks after His death He revealed Himself in a different way?

As regards the appearance to Paul, which undoubtedly he held to be of the same nature as the others, the chief statement relied upon to prove that it was purely spiritual is Galatians 1: 15-16, "It was the good pleasure of God, who separated me even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the Gentiles." This is interpreted to mean that the revelation of Jesus to Paul at Damascus was internal and therefore spiritual. But the text points out three distinct stages in Paul's spiritual history. It says that God set him apart for his work as missionary among the Gentiles even before his birth; then He graciously called him to it,—undoubtedly by the experience near Damascus; and then in His good pleasure He provided a revelation of His Son in Paul,—not to Paul,—which was his final preparation to be an evangelist. What is meant by this revelation of Christ in Paul is evident

from a later verse of this same epistle where Paul says, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). The indwelling of Christ in each believer was the very central truth of Paul's theology. "Christ saves a man, he says, by entering and taking up His abode within him, by binding him indissolubly to Himself, so that it is no longer he that lives, but Christ that lives in him, so that whatever Christ does he does, and whatever he does Christ does" (McGiffert). The great message of his apostleship to the Gentiles was "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27; Rom. 8:10), a message proclaimed by his daily living as well as by his words (Phil. 4:9).

The passage from Galatians, then, tells nothing about the nature of the appearance to Paul; and no other passage in his writings proves that it was spiritual. Stephen in the hour of martyrdom had a spiritual vision of Jesus, as Paul had sad reason never to forget; yet it is omitted from Paul's list, though nothing would have been more natural and impressive than to place it immediately before the appearance to himself, had the two been of the same character. Paul had his own spiritual visions of Jesus,—one of them in Corinth itself (Acts 18:9); but he does not mention them as a proof of the resurrection because they are not a proof of it. Spiritual visions prove simply the continued spiritual existence of Jesus; and neither Paul nor his Corinthian readers seriously doubted that there is life beyond the grave. What Paul needed to establish his faith in Jesus was proof of an actual resurrection. The cross was a stumbling block to him, as to every Jew; a crucified Messiah seemed absurd. True, the Christians whom he persecuted were declaring that their Master had proved Himself the Son of God by

coming forth from the tomb, triumphant over death; but the story was incredible. Nothing short of a personal experience like that which the apostles described could overcome Paul's scepticism; before he could preach the faith of which he now made havoc he must see Jesus, not in a spiritual vision but in the flesh (I Cor. 9: 1).

The empty tomb also remains an objection to the theory of Keim, even as to that of Renan. If the tomb was emptied, who did it? Neither the friends nor the enemies of Jesus had any inducement to carry away His corpse; and for a third party, neither friend nor foe, to rifle the tomb, would be contrary to the deep reverence which the Jews felt for the dead. Keim doubts that the tomb was empty. But if the body of Jesus still slumbered there, the early Christians, who had their headquarters in Jerusalem, would have held the place most sacred, and visited it often; for the Jews were accustomed to visit the burial-places of their great men and their friends. Tertullian recognizes this practice in his statement of a sceptical explanation current in his day, namely, that the gardener took away Christ's body "that his lettuces might come to no harm from the crowds of visitors,"—a most free way of disposing of the body of the cherished Lord of Joseph of Arimathaea.

#### D. A Perverted Apostolic Statement.

This is the theory of Martineau. When the first dismay was over, the apostles, who had fled to Galilee, realized that such a life as that of Jesus could not be terminated by death. Nor could such a one as He have gone "like other men into the storehouse of souls in the underworld." They grew convinced that Jesus, "like the two or three great spirits that walked with God, had

passed into the abodes of the immortal." They "flung themselves with unreserved confidence on the faith that Jesus was in heaven to die no more, and accepted it as their mission to spread this faith." In order to convey to others their profound assurance of His heavenly life they declared that they had seen the risen Christ, meaning by this not visual but spiritual perception. But their hearers, not having the same faith, demanded more material proof; "and it is not surprising that the traditions were so molded as to answer this demand." Thus there gradually grew up the story of Christ's bodily resurrection.

Many of the objections to the previous theories hold against this; and it has others of its own. Keim recognizes that nothing short of a miracle could remove the apostles' despair. Martineau thinks that faith would do it, if only the disciples were once back in Galilee. Which is more probable? Again, if the first disciples, when they said, "We have seen Jesus," were stating simply their strong conviction that He still lived and only waited the Father's time to fulfill His promises,—a strange way of stating it,—could they with honesty allow their hearers to suppose that they were testifying to a physical resurrection? And where did the very early and strong belief arise that He rose on the first day of the week? It took centuries for Christians to settle upon Christmas as the anniversary of His birth, but in a very few years they began to keep Sunday as the anniversary of His resurrection. Why such prompt selection of a special resurrection day unless the statement that Jesus rose on the third day (I Cor. 15:4) was a literal fact?

It is also hard to understand why the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed daily by the early

Christian church, although the Passover meal was an annual celebration, unless the example and teaching of Jesus after the resurrection caused the change? He was made known at Emmaus in the breaking of bread (Luke 24:35); Peter tells that He ate and drank with the apostles after He rose from the dead (Acts 10. 41); and many scholars translate Acts 1:4 "eating with them," instead of "being assembled with them." All these statements imply that Jesus after the resurrection repeatedly celebrated the Eucharist with His disciples; in which case we have the simplest explanation of the change of the celebration from an annual to a daily one.

If the stories of the resurrection appearances are "the product of the mythopoeic energy of religious imagination" aroused in the way Martineau supposes, or in any other way, why are they so brief and sober and in such harmony with the previous history of Jesus? The excited imagination of a credulous age heaps up marvels, and betrays itself by absurdities; and no theme would more surely call forth such treatment than the return of Jesus from the dead. The Gospel of Nicodemus and the recently discovered fragment of the Gospel of Peter are evidence of this. The latter thus describes the resurrection as it was witnessed by the soldiers who guarded the tomb: "They see three men coming forth from the tomb, and two of them supporting one, and a cross following them. And of the two the head reached unto the heaven, but the head of him that was led by them overpassed the heavens. And they heard a voice from the heavens, saying, Hast thou preached to them that sleep? And a response was heard from the cross, Yea." No great acumen is needed to detect the difference in character between



such stories as this and the gospel accounts: and the difference forms a strong argument for the truthfulness of the evangelists.

Those who behold in the earthly years of Jesus a clear manifestation of "glory as of the only begotten from the Father" find no difficulty in accepting the fact of His resurrection. His victory over death is perfectly credible because, as Peter said on the Day of Pentecost, "It was not possible that he should be holden of it." For those who see in His life nothing beyond the possibilities of a consecrated human spirit, belief must be much more difficult. And yet, the testimony of the disciples cannot be contemptuously dismissed, unless a fully satisfactory answer can first be given to the question, "Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8). And a fair treatment of the testimony may, we believe, produce the conclusion reached by Arnold of Rugby: "I have been used for many years to study the history of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them; and I know of no fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort to the understanding of a fair enquirer than the great sign which God has given us, that Christ died and rose again from the dead."

### 3. Importance of the Resurrection.

Jesus appeared to none except His disciples. It was useless to appear to others. The Pharisees, even if convinced that He had risen from the dead, would be only the more sure that He was a son of Beelzebub, and would fear and hate Him accordingly. And the common people, greatly excited, would again expect a

political, sensuous kingdom. Indeed, the disciples themselves were roused to expect this (Acts 1:6). The spiritual belief which Jesus demanded could not be created by a miracle,—not even by that of rising from the dead.

The repeated appearances to the disciples seem to have been intended to teach them two most important truths, each hard to be grasped and scarcely to be taught in any other way; first, that Jesus had triumphed over death and was still their living Lord and Master just as before the crucifixion,—this was realized when they saw Him once more in their midst sharing their life as in the days of old; and second, that when He was no longer to be seen by their eyes or touched by their hands, still He was ever with them to help and teach and guide as before,—this was impressed upon them by the repeated appearances and disappearances. Whenever they specially longed for Him, or, perhaps, when they were thinking least about him,—at any moment and anywhere,—their Master might appear, coming in His old form, resuming at once the old relations; and then, when He had given them the teaching or the consolation they needed, suddenly He would vanish, leaving them once more alone. Increasingly they came to believe that they were never alone,—that He was with them though they saw Him not. And so at last, when He ascended to His Father, the disciples did not feel that they were forsaken or that He was false to His promise to be with them always even unto the end of the world. The ascension brought no sad sense of separation. On the contrary, they “returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.”

Concerning the body of Jesus during these forty

days we can only say that it was suited for this special stage of His work. It was the same body which Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus had placed in the tomb, with the marks of the nails and the spear still evident. Yet it was a body that could appear and disappear at will, enter a closed room, and the like. It was not a spiritual body,—so Jesus Himself said (Luke 24:39); and the statement, frequently made, that it became more spiritual in the later appearances, lacks proof. Yet evidently it was not a body like our own, or else the power Jesus had over it was far beyond any we know. With our present ideas of matter, the act of making a material body vanish does not seem as impossible, save by a miracle, as it did formerly. “It would seem,” says Swete, “that even in His mortal state the Lord possessed some peculiar power of withdrawing His visible presence when He desired to do so. At Nazareth, when the townsfolk sought to throw Him over a precipice, ‘passing through the midst of them he went his way’ (Luke 4:30). After the miracle at Bethesda ‘Jesus conveyed himself away, a multitude being in the place’ (John 5:13). When in the temple court the Jews took up stones to cast at Him, ‘he hid himself, and went out of the temple’ (John 8:59). Such incidents suggest that before the Passion the Lord’s sinless human will possessed a power over His body which is wholly beyond our experience or comprehension. Of the conditions to which His risen body was subject we know nothing; but it may well have been yet more completely under the control of the will. No presumption, then, against the reality of the resurrection can fairly be based on the statement that the risen Christ made Himself visible or invisible at pleasure.”

The importance of the bodily resurrection of Jesus is not the same to us as it was to the disciples. We do not need the evidence which Thomas demanded to establish our faith in His triumph over death; rather, we can claim as our own the last of His beatitudes, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed" (John 20:29). For nineteen centuries the Christian church has been conscious of His constant presence; in fact, the church is the present body of Christ. Nor is the evidence of the forty days the great foundation of belief in His divinity. To modernize His own statement (Luke 16:31), if men will not accept the teachings of Jesus nor regard the lives of His followers, neither will they be persuaded though it is proved that He rose from the dead. Like all evidence from miracles, the resurrection convinces only those who are willing to be convinced. If one holds that Jesus was only an ordinary man, no amount of evidence can make the gospel story credible; the sceptic may be silenced but he is not convinced. "When I am told that to be a disciple, I must believe in the resurrection of Jesus, I invert the order and reply, to believe that Jesus is risen and lives the heavenly life, I must be His disciple" (Martineau). But to say all this, is not to say that the question of the resurrection is of little practical value. The historical truth of this part of His life involves the truth of the whole story of His life. And our assurance that "now is Christ risen from the dead" forms the basis of our confidence that "even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him." The full significance of His resurrection in Christian doctrine is a subject too great to enter upon. "The economy which begins with a physical incarnation naturally and appropriately ends with a physical resur-

rection. This much we can see though we may feel that this is not all " (Sanday).

#### 4. The Ministry of the Forty Days.

We are so interested in the fact and the form of the resurrection appearances that often we fail to realize and appreciate the ministry of Jesus when He thus appeared to His disciples. We deal with His training of the Twelve as if it ended at Calvary. But by so doing we omit what must have been the most profitable period of all their intercourse with Him,—the period when at last their eyes were opened, and they knew Him to be their Lord and their God. That Jesus looked forward to it as a time of richest instruction in spiritual truth is shown by His statement at the Last Supper, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," followed by His promise, "The hour cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in dark sayings, but shall tell you plainly of the Father" (John 16: 12, 25). Up to the hour of His death He had been hindered in teaching His disciples by their apathy and lack of spiritual apprehension, which seemed sometimes to try Him almost beyond endurance (Mark 8: 17; 9: 19; 14: 37). And a still greater hindrance was the fact that He could not place before them His whole life-work because it was not yet accomplished. Now both these hindrances were removed; and He was able to teach the full lesson of His life to pupils eager and sympathetic.

The forty days were for the disciples a period of great emotional uplift. Their utter despair had been turned into joy,—a joy not to be taken from them; and in the flood of emotions the words of Jesus reached their hearts as never before (Luke 24: 32). The



period was, also, one of great intellectual activity. The startling facts of the cross, the tomb and the resurrection roused their minds to review the whole past; and in that review everything stood forth in a new light, so that, concerning many an act of Jesus, His promise found fulfillment, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7). With the revelation of Jesus as a Messiah far other and grander than they had dreamed, there came a revelation of what He had been striving to accomplish in His ministry. "Many hints and sayings of His which they had scarcely noticed or had misunderstood, now came back to memory and fitted into their places in the new universe of ideas which was shaping itself in their consciousness. They now began to know their Master after the spirit; and though they had known Him after the flesh, they now henceforth knew Him so no more" (Stalker). It was the beginning of the experience which Jesus described when He said, "The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John 14:26).

From the Master Himself at this time the disciples must have received His very richest teachings. There was much, indeed, for them to learn: the meaning and use of the sacraments, which they would need at the very outset of their missionary work; the great lesson of the cross, which had just been set before them; the mission of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, concerning whom, as yet, they knew nothing; the nature of the Messianic kingdom, about which they still held most imperfect ideas; their own future work, so different from what they had hitherto imagined. In-

struction in these and similar subjects had been practically impossible at any earlier time; but to understand them was indispensable, if the apostles were to carry the full gospel to a waiting world. That Jesus left them without instruction on the deepest things concerning Himself and His mission would seem incredible, even if the records gave no evidence to the contrary. But the evangelists do tell us of one full afternoon spent by Him in patiently explaining to two obscure disciples the Old Testament predictions of His sufferings and death (Luke 24: 13-31); and if these received such precious teaching, what must have been given to the apostles?

Luke expressly says that the work of Jesus in the forty days was "speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3); but neither he nor the others have recorded more than a few most memorable utterances. It may well be that some of Jesus' teachings at this time have been grouped in the Gospels with earlier lessons. Much of the instructions to the Twelve when they were sent on their first missionary journey (Matt. 10: 5 f.) are wholly unsuited to that occasion but might fitly have been given now. The discourse at Capernaum (John 6:26 f.) has a clear connection with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and portions of it would seem to be additions from what Jesus said when He unveiled the meaning of that sacrament after His resurrection. Possibly, also, we are told but little about the teachings of the forty days because the whole teaching of the apostles was considered to be a reproduction of it. One thing is certain, we cannot account for the sermon of Peter at Pentecost and all the words and work of the apostles in the crowded ministry that immediately followed, unless

we suppose that Jesus gave His disciples far deeper and richer spiritual instruction than what they were ready to receive, or what was prepared to present to them, before His death and resurrection. The Pentecostal baptism did, indeed, bestow power for witness bearing; but the truths to which they bore witness must have been imparted by their Master after the cross had crowned His work.

To ignore the ministry of the forty days is to leave an inexplicable break between the gospel of Jesus and the gospel of the apostles. From it arises the frequent assertion that the Christ whom the apostles proclaimed was a conception of their own, fashioned from other sources than the teachings of the Master about Himself. If we end our study of the life of Jesus at the tomb in the garden, and begin our study of the Apostolic Age with a denial that the stone was ever rolled away from the tomb, the assertion seems well founded; the Christ of Paul, "who was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead," becomes a figure of Paul's own theological invention; and the cross is simply a symbol of unmerited suffering. The scholars who support this view are urgent in their insistence that to know what Christianity really is, we must go back to Christ; but, as Stalker points out, "The attempt being made in our day to go back to Christ in the sense of making Christianity consist solely of what Jesus did and taught in the days before His burial—with the resurrection left out—is a return to the position of the disciples in the days of their ignorance, if not to that of the enemies by whom He was crucified."

### 5. Conclusion.

The story of Jesus must be a story without an end. When we have reached the point where the gospel narrative ceases, we have finished only the first chapter in it. Luke grasped this fact, and wrote as the opening words of the Book of Acts, "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up." The work of Jesus while He tabernacled in the flesh was but the beginning of a work that He was still continuing, through the ministry of His faithful servants and by His own unseen presence, at the time when Luke was writing. And the work is yet in progress, and the story is still incomplete. The future chapters remain to be revealed and recorded. How many there may be, and what they will contain, we cannot even surmise. But we do know that the kingdom of God is in our midst and the Son of Man is upon its throne; and we also know that "he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet"; and "when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power; when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; then cometh the end" (I Cor. 15:24 f.).

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